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Crikey!

THE GREAT BRITISH COMICS MAGAZINE!

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SPACESHIP ANDY

THE PHANTOM IN THE UK

THE AVENGERS

ISSN 1754-954X

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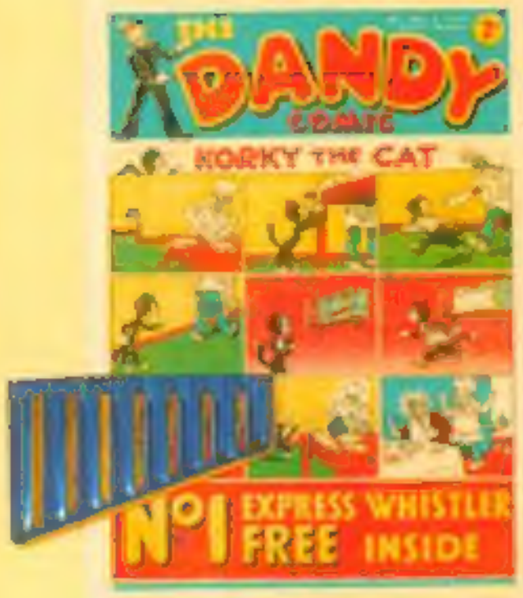

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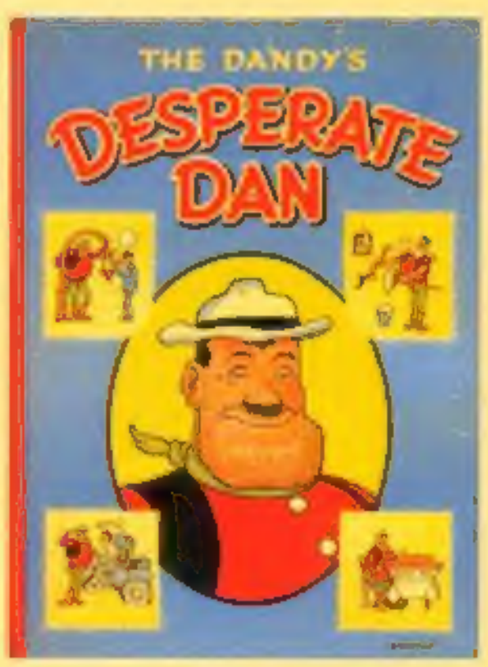

WELCOME TO THE NEW Crikey!

Glenn B Fleming *Publisher/Designer*

Crikey!

A long time ago in a galaxy far away, Beatle George Harrison sang "All things must pass" as he lamented the demise of the greatest pop group ever. We all know what happened to the Beatles after that. As you will have seen by the header above, big changes have happened at Crikey! *since our last issue. Editor Brian Clarke has left the* Crikey! *team and is heading forever upwards in a new career. I wish Brian all the best and thank him for editing this issue;* Crikey! *would not have been here if it were not for the dedication and talent he showed us in the past pages of the magazine.Tom Sweetman has also decided to leave the fold in order to pursue other interests. Good luck, Tom!*

So - of the original three founding members of 'The Great British Comics Magazine' only I am left. That obviously leaves me to take the magazine forward. This is a new area of publishing for me and I am looking forward to the challenge.

Tony Ingram has been a long time contributor and will continue to astound us with his expertise and insight to all things British (well, comics anyway!) and Peter Hansen, Phil Clarke and Mike Higgs of Blasé Books *continue to be a great supporter of the magazine. Indeed, it must be said,* Blasé *is the reason this issue is in full colour. My deepest thanks to them for their support and faith in* Crikey!.

The downside to the recent exodus of personnel means that Crikey! *will revert to a quarterly magazine from the next issue. This means issue 9 will be on sale around the end of February next year. Time contraints (and a full time job to put food on the table) means that a bi-monthly output is just not possible. Please don't see this as a step backwards; this is merely a logical step to continue with the acknowledged high standards of* Crikey!. *For example, issue 9 brings an exclusive chat with* Modesty Blaise *artist Romero - watch out for that one!*

I believe this issue is the best Crikey! *yet. We can finally see our great artwork the way it was meant to be - in full, glorious colour! If sales and other commitments are maintained perhaps this can be an on going thing. We'll see! Other plans for* Crikey! *are in the pipeline already. All I need is your continuing support!*

Let me know what you think of this issue!

All the best

Glenn

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Crazy Tony Ingram looks back with fond nostalgia at some very unusual British comic characters.

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The man who brought back Colonel Daniel MacGregor Dare, Rod Barzilay, tells us about his excellent magazine.

The Phantom **10-15**

Phil Clarke and Mike Higgs tell us why they are such big fans of an American icon.

Charley's War **16-21**

To mark the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War, Crikey! invited Private Tony Ingram to share his thoughts on that groundbreaking strip from the 80s.

1968 **22-23**

1968 was a year of turmoil and unrest - not least at the first Birmingham Comics Con. Phil Clarke reveals all...

Avenging Artist **24-29**

Glenn B Fleming takes a look at the forgotten art of Spanish artist Emilio Frejo Abegon.

Mickey Mouse Weekly **30-35**

Peter Hansen tells how one of America's most endearing characters was taken to the hearts of so many Brits.

My Comicy Saturday **37-40**

Veteran catoonist Mike Higgs shows us why he has been drawing for a living for so long...continue with the day job, Mike!

The Best of British **42-47**

Peter Hansen gives us the low down on Britain's finest comic artists.

A very, very special thanks goes to Peter Hansen, Phil Clarke & Mike Higgs of **Blasé Books** *for making this issue literally stand out from the rest.*

Writers this issue:
Rod Barzilay, Phil Clarke, Glenn B Fleming, Peter Hansen, Mike Higgs & Tony Ingram.

Fact checking:
Ray Moore.

Advertising rates:
Back cover in colour £250. Inside covers in colour £150.
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Please supply camera ready artwork on disk or PDF. Don't forget your fonts! If artwork is required, a charge will be made - please contact for details.

Note: *The closing date for booking ads for issue nine is 1 February 2009.*

Crikey! is a Sequential Media publication.
13 Rosethorns Close, Gladewood, Middleton, Manchester. M24 6TP

Website: www.crikeyuk.co.uk

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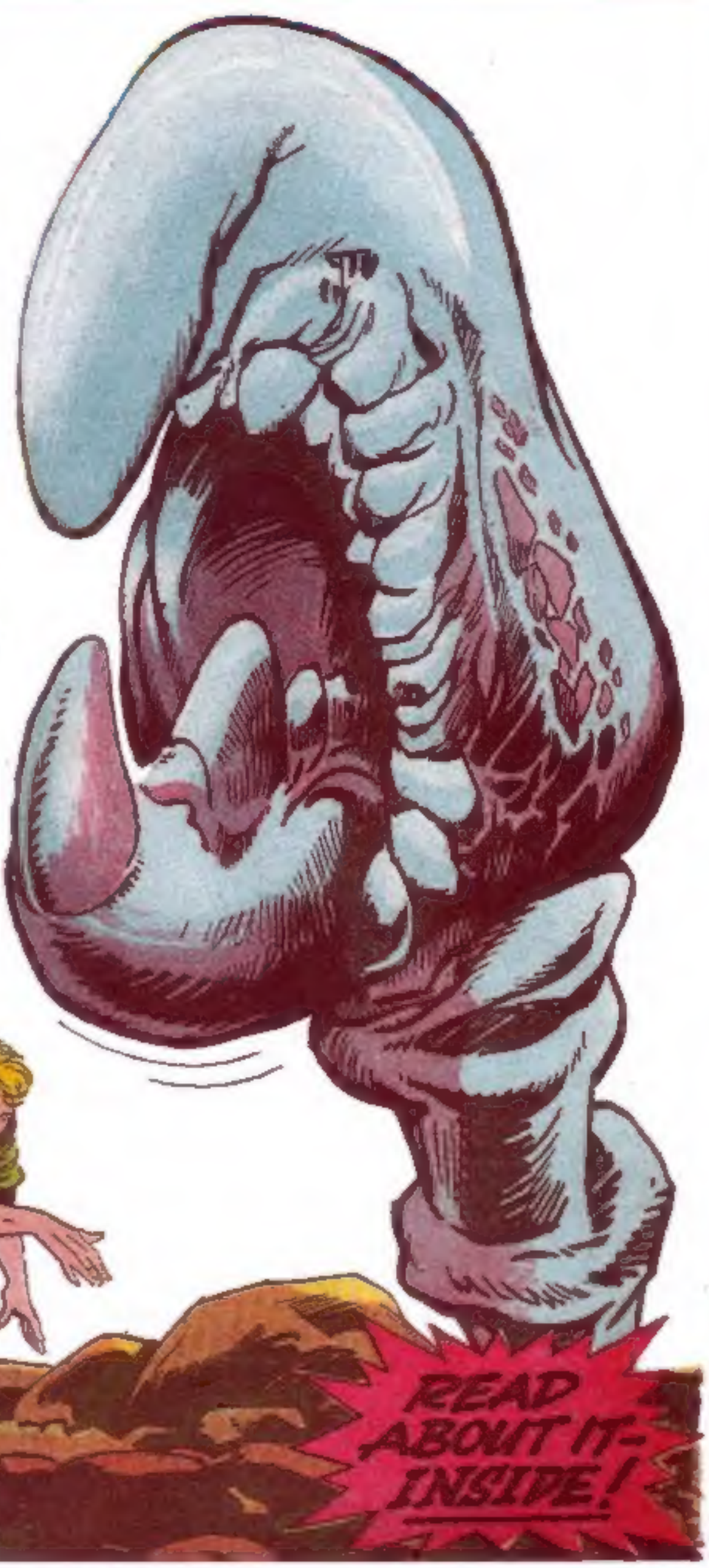
NUTTY NOTIONS

Each issue of *Crikey!* features a selection of some of the lovingly bizarre concepts that have graced the pages of British comics in the years past. Once again *Tony Ingram* proves that he has read way too many comics in his time... *Ideas and nominations for future Nutty Notions gratefully accepted through the* Crikey! *website (www.crikeyuk.co.uk), click 'contact' and away you go! Enjoy!*

CLAWS OF TERROR (BULLET, 1978. ART BY TERRY PATRICK)

A sea bed explosion in the Persian Gulf awakens a terrifying sea creature, just as (somewhat predictably) the super-tanker Sea Pride arrives in the area! Cue all sorts of trouble for young officers Dick Porter and Bob Campling as their fishing expedition is cut short by an encounter with the beast-but, irritatingly, nobody believes their story of being menaced by a three hundred foot long giant lobster! At least, until the cantankerous crustacean goes on the offensive...

Needless to say, Bob and Dick were vindicated, and no doubt once it was all over there was lobster thermidor for everyone. Every mealtime for about three years, probably...



DREAMY DANIEL (SPARKY, 1970'S. ART BY GORDON BELL)

Years before The Beano came up with Les Pretend, the Sparky Comic had Dreamy Daniel, a boy with a big imagination. What sets Daniel apart, though, is that where the likes of Les seem to be harmless daydreamers, Dreamy's misadventures had an edge to them which makes one wonder if he wasn't actually psychotic. Never seeming to engage with reality, Daniel would flit from one imaginary scenario to another, heedless of the chaos he was causing in the real world. Ritalin, anyone?

FAT TRAMPS (COMIC LIFE, 1915. ART BY H. O'NEILL)

No, this was not a prototype of Viz's 'Fat Slags'. In fact, it's the only name I can find for the generally untitled front page strip of James Henderson & Son's 'Comic Life', way back in the days of the Great War. The two tramps were nothing if not inventive (as witness their line of inflatable furniture, though how they managed to manufacture it is a mystery), which was just as well as they seemed to spend a lot of time thwarting the Kaiser's troops (referred to as "Germhuns")-a favoured pastime for many comic strip stars of the period. Good on you, Fat Tramps!

Digger's Wandering Wardrobe (Dandy Book 1960. Art by Ron Smith)

Digger Marr was a prospector in Canada, whose most treasured possession was his wardrobe. Well, obviously. So, when Digger's favoured furniture was nicked by some thieving Injuns, mild mannered Mr Marr set out to get it back, in a slightly outlandish tale which eventually saw Digger take cover in his beloved box to hide from bears, and then baffle them superstitious Injuns by pretending to be "the spirit of the mirror box". Eventually, Digger recovers his wardrobe, which the redskins from then on worship as a god. More politically incorrect whimsy from those jolly japesters at DC Thomson...

DIGGER'S WANDERING WARDROBE
CROOKED NOSE and Crazy Horse were Pinto Indians, and they had no right to be in Digger Marr's log cabin here in North-West Canada. It was Digger's big wardrobe mirror that fascinated them.
They had never seen a mirror as big as this and they play-acted in front of it.
Digger had been out prospecting, and his feet made no sound in the powdery snow when he returned. He pushed the door open.
YOU THIEVIN' VARMINTS! WHAT ARE YE DOIN' IN MY SHACK?
COME BACK HERE! I'LL PERFORATE THE PAIR O' YE!

Return of the Sludge (Lion Annual 1967. Art by Bill Lacey)

THE RETURN OF The SLUDGE
THANKS TO THE ACTION OF CANADIAN NEWSPAPERMEN BILL HANLEY AND RICK SLADE, THE SLUDGE, A TERRIBLE LIVING JELLY-LIKE CREATURE, WAS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. NIAGARA ACID HAD FINALLY OBLITERATED THE MONSTER THAT NOTHING ELSE SEEMED ABLE TO KILL... BUT UNKNOWN TO ANYONE ONE TINY FRAGMENT OF THE SLUDGE SURVIVED!
AS THE GIGANTIC LIGHTNING STRUCK, THE SURVIVING SLUDGE UPRAE...
MY OATH! HERE! HERE! SOMETHING'S THERE!
...THE SLUDGE ABSORBED THE LIGHTNING'S ENERGY — AND GREW!
SHAW! WE'VE GOT TO WARN SOMEONE...
THEY'LL NEVER BELIEVE IT! IT'S THE SLUDGE, EVERYONE THOUGHT IT WAS FINISHED!

"Thanks to the action of Canadian newspapermen Bill Hanley and Rick Slade, The Sludge was thought to have been destroyed". But, you can't keep a good "living jelly-like creature" down, and the oozing menace regrew itself to terrorise Niagara Falls! The Sludge may not have been much of a conversationalist, but its many talents extended to driving a coach and causing trees to walk, en-route to trying to feed on the power of a nuclear plant. Could anything halt the remorseless advance of The Sludge? Well yes. Luckily, it had a vulnerability to Portuguese Man O' War jellyfish, which Bill and Rick managed to discover just in time. What a truly rubbish monster.

Ginger's Super Jeep (Dandy, 1950's. Art by James 'Peem' Walker)

Ginger Griffiths is an ordinary young boy who likes nothing better than trundling around Greentown in his soap box cart, those home made contraptions so beloved of kids in DC Thomson's comic papers of half a century ago. Ginger's cartie, however, is probably the only one on the planet likely to get a speeding ticket, since it has been fitted with rather unusual green wheels by a passing spaceman from Venus, which give it the ability to do extraordinary things. This is Ginger's Super Jeep. In addition to being able to travel at incredible speeds, Ginger's jeep can cling to any surface, enabling him to drive up walls and across ceilings. And just in case anyone tries to give Ginger any trouble, the helpful alien has also given him a gun which fires a variety of interesting and potentially lethal gases. Jolly good show, Mr Spaceman. Luckily, Ginger's a responsible sort of lad. But you didn't actually know that when you gave him all this lethal weaponry did you, you extraterrestrial imbecile?

SPACESHIP AWAY.....

THE RETURN OF DAN DARE

BY ROD BARZILAY

THE WALL'S SPLIT. WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SHIP — THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE GREEN STUFF.
ALL RIGHT, PROCEED WITH CARE. WE'LL FOLLOW WHEN WE CAN, BUT I DOUBT IF THE DOORS WILL OPEN NOW — EVEN IF YOU FIND THE CONTROL ROOM.
...AND IN THE CORRIDOR...
MUST MAKE THE CABIN BEFORE THEY RECOVER...
COME ON, STEVE — MOVE IT!
PHEW! DOOR SHUT — LOCK DISABLED. GOOD! NEXT — DELAY ANY TREEN REINFORCEMENTS WHILE I WORK OUT A PLAN OF ACTION.
IF I PUT THE CORRIDOR OUT OF BOUNDS I CAN PREVENT THEM FROM REACHING ME, AND THE GYM, SO THEY CAN'T PLAY THE HOSTAGE CARD AGAIN.
EMERGENCY FIRE CONTROL
PRESS
CONTROL
ATTENTION! — ATTENTION! — BLAZE CODE 5 — EMERGENCY DECOMPRESSION IN ONE MINUTE.
DAN, WE'RE THROUGH TO THE DECK BELOW.
ROGER THAT, BUT YOUR RADIO'S BREAKING UP — THE SHIP'S STRUCTURE MUST BE BLOCKING THE SIGNAL.
THERE'S AN AREA OF LIGHT NEARBY — WE'LL INVESTIGATE.
NO ANSWER! WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH DAN!
IT'S PULLING US IN! I CAN'T BREAK FREE!
ALL THE GAUGES ARE OVERLOADING — I'VE MISCALCULATED!
CONTINUED

ART BY DON HARLEY

Readers who frequent comic and science fiction shops such as Forbidden Planet or attend specialist comics fairs may well have seen a glossy comic strip publication called Spaceship Away tucked into the magazine rack. It's bright cover with exciting graphics and enticing strap lines tell the reader exactly what they are letting themselves in for – 40 or so pages of retro 50s style comic strip adventure featuring several comic and radio stars of yesteryear along with some new ones too.

For those thousands of *Crikey!* readers not so far enticed into comic fairs or simply living too far

For more information look up the Spaceship Away web-site :-http://spaceshipaway.org.uk or write to Rod Barzilay at :- 8 Marley Close, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset. DT3 6DH

All issues are still available (£6.99 each uk) buy 6 and you get one free!

away from a comic shop, we thought it would be timely to introduce you to this stylist publication. We invited the editor, founder and guiding light behind this unique fan publication - Rod Barzilay, to fill us in on the backstory to Britain's real comic of the future.

Spaceship Away was started as a means to get a brand new '1950s style' Dan Dare story into print along with the story behind the project. The creation of that yarn ('The Phoenix Mission' - set in between two Dan Dare classic adventures 'The Ship that Lived' and 'The Phantom Fleet') is a tale in itself, and ended up involving three of the original Frank Hampson Dan Dare team in its making. It started with a somewhat strange combination – a dyslexic amateur writer (myself!) paired with a part colour blind artist, Keith Watson. - Don Harley and Joan Porter would join us later.

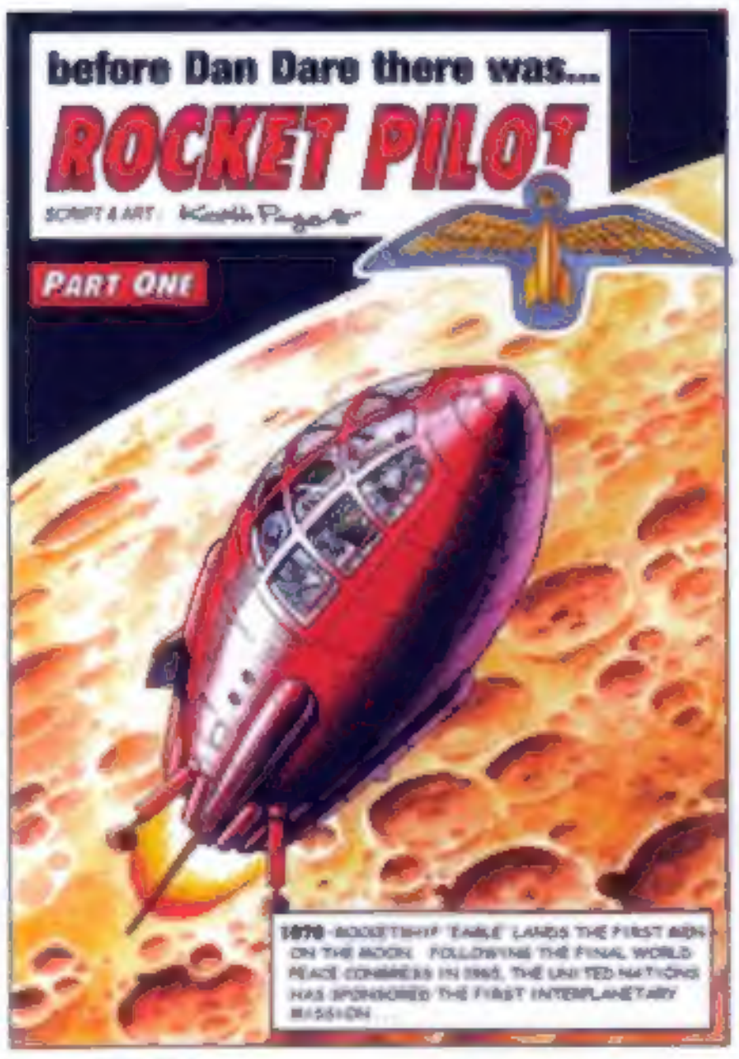
The project was sponsored by a small group of dedicated Dan Dare fans, wanting to get as close to the original strip as possible to capture the old magic once again. We even made the pages look like those from the old Eagle, same style titles, red Eagle logo box and even a four-and-a-half old pence price tag! The effect we were after was for a reader to discover a long 'lost' set of Eagles, somehow missed. >

SPACESHIP AWAY
Part 1
The Original
DAN DARE
returns in new stories
and more . . .
Featuring in this issue . . .
Keith Watson - Last ever artwork
First three episodes of the PHOENIX MISSION
Heroes Pete - Flight Deck Centre Spread
How the Project all began . . . plus DAN BEAM!
SPACESHIP AWAY
Part 2
The Original
DAN DARE
returns in new stories
and more . . .
NOW 32 PAGES
Three more PHOENIX MISSION episodes
PROJECT PLUTO Dan Dare Strip
Getaware Spaceliner - plus
MARS - 1949 . . . plus

ART BY C WESTON

ART BY ERIC MACKENZIE

ART BY FERDINANDO TACCONI


before Dan Dare there was...
ROCKET PILOT
SCRIPT & ART: Keith Page
PART ONE
1970 - ROCKETSHIP 'EAGLE' LANDS THE FIRST MEN ON THE MOON. FOLLOWING THE FINAL WORLD PEACE CONGRESS IN 1965, THE UNITED NATIONS HAS SPONSORED THE FIRST INTERPLANETARY MISSION.

ART BY KEITH PAGE

Great lengths were gone to in an effort to get our story details solid for example. A new type of spacecraft was needed for the tale, so an Explorer class spaceship was invented, along with a plausible history to fit in with other 1950s Dan Dare spacecraft. Full deck plans were created so that the story would stand up to scrutiny and that meant that details such as crew numbers, work stations, facilities, design features, interiors could work in such a spacecraft. Mike Wood even made a thirty-inch scale model of the ship. (To date, three different model makers have made five spacecraft from the new stories. Two have already featured on covers of Spaceship Away.) We also put in a lot of effort to create a front page of a 'Daily World Post' newspaper to set the background for new readers. Even fake photos were created for this (thanks to Bill Rudling), as it all had to blend in perfectly with what had gone before in the Dan Dare world, or the old fans would lynch us!

Things didn't go to plan. (What does?) We thought the project would take eighteen months to complete from when the artist started, but in the end, after all kinds of ups and downs, eight years had gone by! Along the way, Keith Watson died, costs escalated, and some sponsors dropped out. But because I had promised Keith's family that somehow I would get the project finished so that fans could see his last ever artwork (It had meant a lot to him - he wanted to do the story as a tribute to Frank Hampson.) I battled on regardless.

By the time the story was ready all the publishers who had initially shown interest had moved on; New Eagle had finished, Hawk Books had stopped, the

MASTER — WHAT DO THE STRANGE SOUNDS MEAN?
RHYTHMIC TAPPING — DIFFERENT LOCATIONS — THE EARTHMEN ARE COMMUNICATING.
MASTER, MY MEN COULD RETAKE THE CORRIDOR IN SPACE-SUITS.
NO, POSITION GUARDS AT ALL ENTRY POINTS — I WILL INTERPRET THE SIGNALS FIRST.
MAYBE THAT GAMESMASTER FELLOW BROUGHT IT ON BOARD WITH HIM.
SAY WHAT?! — AN IMPERIAL CASKET! HOW COULD THE CAPTAIN HAVE THIS?
YOU MAY BE RIGHT, O EARTHMAN DIG. — SEE, IT'S SECURED WITH SEAL OF THE HIGH LORD.
EE, I WONDER WHY IT WAS SO IMPORTANT T' HIS NIBS!
SO, CAN YOU STILL SEE THE POLO?
YES, SHE'S SLOWLY WEAVING DEEPER INTO THIS JUNKYARD.
SLOWLY? THEN THERE'S A CHANCE YOU COULD CATCH THEM UP AND FIND OUT WHAT THE PROBLEM IS.
AAA!
IT'S NO GO, COLONEL. WE NEED THE POLO'S HEAVY DUTY GEAR TO SHIFT THIS, BUT HOW DO WE GET IT HERE WITH THE DOORS CLOSED?
NO! — IT CAN'T BE — HE'S DEAD!
CONTINUED

ART BY DON HARLEY

ART BY :
(RIGHT) TIM BOOTH
(CENTRE AND PART 9 COVER) DON HARLEY
(BOTTOM LEFT) GARRY LEACH

Tomorrow's World Magazine and the Planet on Sunday had both folded. It would take another four years before I could get a license to publish Dan Dare material and if it wasn't for being pushed into contact with Desmond Shaw, a DD fan who loves to pep up images and layouts, the idea to go it alone might never have happened. Instead, with his knowledge and inspiration ideas bounced between us and Spaceship Away was born.

Out three times a year, the magazine is in full colour throughout, printed on glossy paper, and since Part 3 has had laminated covers. (Having spent thousands of pounds to produce the early artwork, we wanted to show it at its best.) However, as soon as Part 1 came out, a flood of other Dan Dare material started arriving - it turned out that other fans had also been working on projects to revive our hero. Everything from cartoons, pictures of models, and other strips were sent in, so the page count grew bigger and bigger, 24 to 32, to 36, to 44 pages.

After six issues we started looking outside of Dan's world to give the >

Spaceship Away costs £6.99 (UK) and is available from specialist comic shops or via our web-site:-
http://spaceshipaway.org.uk
or myself at:- 8 Marley Close, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 6DH
The site has full notes on every issue, plus sample pages, all the covers, and the latest news in the pipeline.
All issues are still available and we also run a 'pay for 6, get 7' deal for subscribers.

ISN'T SHE A BEAUTY, DIG – JUST THINK WHAT SHE CAN DO FOR US!
THE BEST PRODUCT OF TREEN AND THERON SCIENTIFIC DESIGN, COLONEL DARE
COME THIS WAY EARTHMAN AND I WILL SHOW YOU ABOARD
I AM THINKING, COLONEL DAN, SIR ...
WE HAVE THE EARTH ONE!
JUST DISCONNECT A CABLE AND...
EARTHLING — THIS IS YOUR END!
MIGHTY MEKONTA!
AAH!
Part 9
Summer 2006
Now Featuring 3 Space Dimensions !
SPACESHIP AWAY.....
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NO WORDS FROM RILGOR ?
A SHOUT – THEN NOTHING, O MASTER.
UK £6.99 - Overseas £9.00
Dan Dare - Jet Morgan - Hal Starr

magazine a wider reader base, and brought in two other Sci-Fi strips. Charles Chilton's "Journey into Space - Planet of Fear" story illustrated by Ferdinando Tacconi from the 1950s, and Sydney Jordan's Hal Starr from the 90s, which was translated from Dutch into English and recoloured for us by Dr. Who artist John Ridgway. (This finished in Part 15.) We also feature articles and new artwork from a string of well-known artists and writers. So far, eight from old Eagle, six from New Eagle, three from Dr Who, four from Thunderbirds and a host of others from different fields (2000AD, and Radio Times amongst them!), have graced our pages. Artwork includes cutaways (Graham

LOOKS LIKE YON SONDAR'S HATCHED US A FLYING GREENHOUSE SIR, AND NAMED IT AFTER MY OLD DAFT AUNTIE!
ANASTASIA
LOOK AGAIN, DIG - I THINK WE'VE JUST BEEN GIVEN THE SWEETEST LITTLE SHIP THIS SIDE OF SATURN!

ART BY TIM BOOTH

Bleathman), plans, short strips, one-off illustrations (from the likes of Keith Watson, Andrew Skilleter, Martin Baines, Ian Kennedy, Chris Weston, Bruce Cornwell, Gerald Palmer, John Burns, John Ridgway, Garry Leach and Don Harley), along with photos and write-ups. Regular writers include Alastair Crompton, and Jeremy Briggs. We've even had a couple of text stories as well – Dan Dare yarns from Simon Garrett, and Denis Steeper.

Earlier this year we expanded our content again in order to reach out to more non-Dan Dare fans. Iain McClumpha's CGI 'Space Girls' strip was added, (that certainly stirred things up!) and now as we hit our fifth birthday the page count goes up again (48 pages) with the addition of two more outer-space adventure strips. Philip Harbottle / Ron Turner's 'Nick Hazard - Interstellar agent - Mission to Vorga', now reformatted in colour thanks again to John Ridgway; and a John Freeman / Mike Nicoll Ex Astris CGI prequel story 'Secrets of Ceres'. (Bulletproof Comics recently put out a later Ex Astris story – 'Homecoming' -

ART BY JOHN RIDGWAY

which has been much praised.)

In fact, the magazine has doubled in size since it started, and now features 11 regular strips. There are three serious Dan Dare tales running at once, all from different time slots of his career. Keith Page's (New Eagle and Commando books) 'Rocket Pilot' that started out as the story of Sir Hubert Guest also has Dan on board, and will conclude at the point that the famous 'Venus' story starts. My own 'Green Nemesis' continues from where 'The Phoenix Mission' left off; and Tim Booth's (artist and psychedelic cult band member of 'Doctor Strangely Strange' from Southern Ireland) 'The Gates of Eden' yarn is set in between the 'Venus' story and 'The Red Moon Mystery'. In addition to this, there is a tongue-in-cheek parody of the whole behind the scenes Dan Dare history from Eric MacKenzie, called 'Dan Dire'; plus two clever Ray Aspden humour strips 'Mekki' and 'Our Bertie' loosely based on characters from DD. (The Mekon, and Digby's young lad Bertie.) And also amongst the non-DD stuff we have been following the adventures of Andy Boyce's light-hearted 'Dan Bear'. Andy is sometimes employed on archaeological digs in Egypt to sketch discoveries in situ. 'Dan Bear' started as cartoon doodles to send home to his partner.

So far we have shown work by 71 different writers and artists. (We even have special binders available to store the issues.) In the new year more known people will be contributing to our pages. Acclaimed SF writer Stephen Baxter is writing an article for us and already in the bag is a new centre-spread painted by Mike Noble! (His first artwork for a while I believe.) Graham Bleathman hopes to deliver another stunning cutaway, as well as more new stuff from John Burns, Gerry Embleton, and Ian Kennedy in the pipeline. We will also be looking at the connections between the Dan Dare artists and the worlds of Gerry Anderson ...

I sometimes wonder just where SA will end up? ●

THE PHANTOM IN THE UK

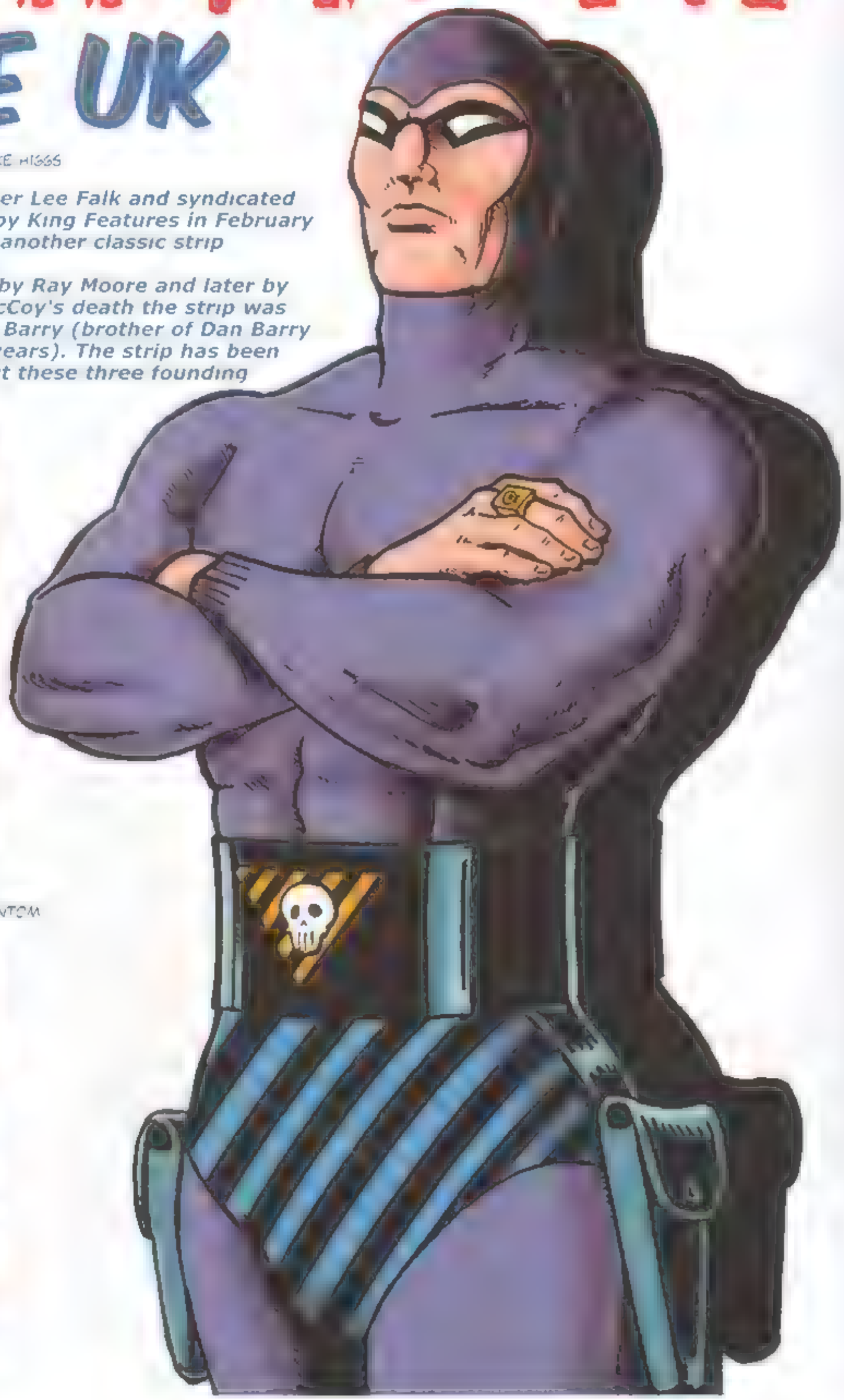
BY PHIL CLARKE & MIKE HIGGS

'The Phantom' was created by writer Lee Falk and syndicated in the US and the rest of the world by King Features in February 1936. Falk was also responsible for another classic strip character, 'Mandrake the Magician'.

'The Phantom' was initially drawn by Ray Moore and later by his assistant Wilson McCoy. After McCoy's death the strip was taken over and made his own by Sy Barry (brother of Dan Barry who drew 'Flash Gordon' for many years). The strip has been drawn by many others of course, but these three founding artists are the best known.

LEON HARRISON GROSS
(APRIL 28 1911 - MARCH 13, 1999),
BETTER KNOWN AS LEE FALK, CREATOR OF THE PHANTOM

SEYMOUR "SY" BARRY, BORN IN 1928, BEST KNOWN FOR HIS WORK ON THE PHANTOM COMIC STRIP WHICH HE DREW FOR OVER 30 YEARS



Although rarely talked about amongst British comic fans, even those who prefer the American imports, The Phantom is a seminal character and one who has impacted greatly on our hobby.

Les Daniels described the proto costumed 'mystery man' as follows;

Created by Lee Falk, the character of the Phantom, with his costume of black mask and purple tights and his secret identity, manifested two of the essential features which would make comic books a vigorous and independent industry within two years. (Comix - A History of Comic Books in America)

As well as having a huge impact on the American comic industry, The Ghost Who Walks, also made a big impression on the British scene. Comics historians Phil Clarke and Mike Higgs 'walk' us through the story.

'The Phantom' made his debut as a character in Britain in the last few years before the outbreak of the Second World War in imports of 'Feature Books' and 'Better Little Books'. This small square publications made there way to these shores from the States to these shores as ship's ballast. They were, literally, dead weight. Once docked, the ballast was sold on to newstrade wholesalers as an extra source of income for the ship's owners.

ART BY WALTER HOWARTH

To our knowledge the Phantom strip started to appear in UK papers and publications post-war. This included a regular daily appearance in Birmingham's Evening Despatch which is where the authors of this item first came into contact with (and developed a life-long affection for) the character.

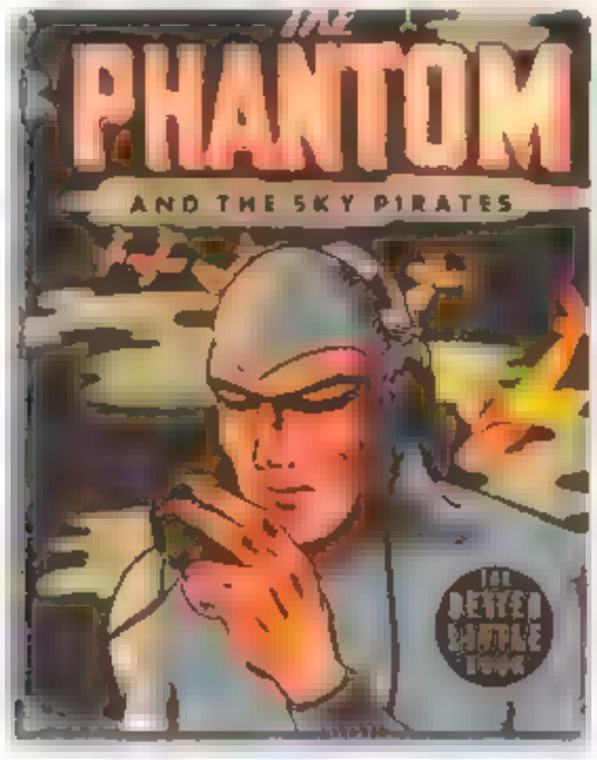
In the early 50s the first black and white reprint comic books of The Phantom were also imports – this time from Australia! The first comic book of British origin to feature The Phantom was King Comics, a weekly from L. Miller & Son, which featured one Sunday strip per issue in black and white. The character also featured in the rare King Comics Annual.

Another title from Miller that came out in the same year (1954) was Four Aces which lasted for six monthly issues and carried 'The Phantom' and three other King Features' strips in black and white.

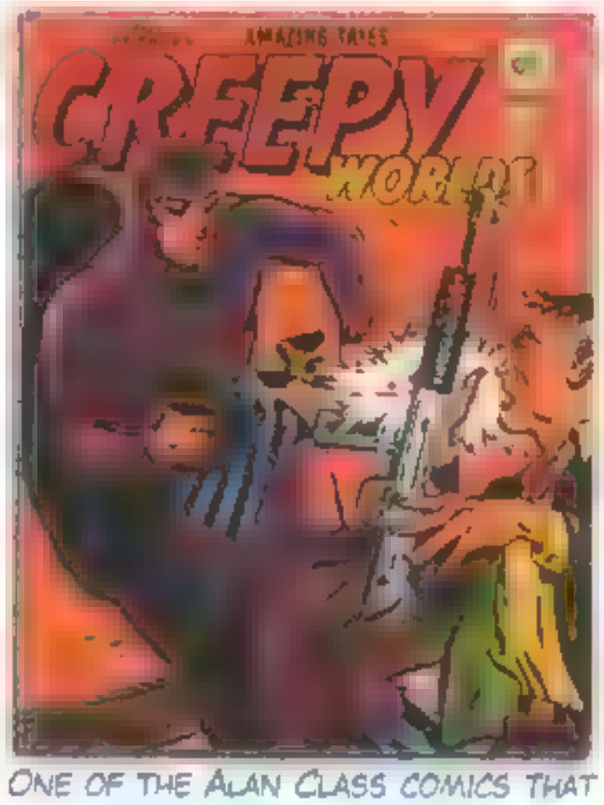
In 1958 L. Miller came back to The Phantom by publishing a series of 68-page black and white one shilling reprint comics which lasted for 18 issues, eventually finishing in 1962.

In the mid-60s, World Distributors of Manchester published The Phantom World Adventure Library a digest magazine also in black and white plus a couple of hard cover Phantom Annuals and a games/puzzle book.

City Magazines launched TV Tornado in >



BETTER LITTLE BOOK U.S. IMPORT



ONE OF THE ALAN CLASS COMICS THAT CARRIED PHANTOM REPRINTS.

KING COMICS FROM 1954 PUBLISHED BY L. MILLER

1967 which lasted a respectable 88 issues until September 1968. This reprinted an edited version of the Phantom newspaper strip and 'The Phantom' appeared on numerous covers, suggesting that the charter still had pulling power.

Also in 1967, Purnell of London published a one-off Comic Cartoon Annual which featured full colour reprints of King Features' strips including our black masked mystery man.

In 1969 City Magazines published a new series of their comic, "TV21". Some of the "TV Tornado" strips were transferred over including The Phantom.

They again used re-edited Sy Barry Sundays in black & white.

In the 1970s, Alan Class reprinted the American King's Comics monthly comic book Phantom stories in black and white in various issues of his one shilling monthly titles, Creepy Worlds, Sinister tales, Amazing Stories of Suspense and Uncanny Tales.

In 1985, Harmsworth Publications, part of the Associated Newspapers, published a weekly comic featuring full colour reprints of American Sunday strips. This included two pages of 'The Phantom' per issue by Sy Barry from the previous year. The comic sold for 15p at newsagents and lasted for ten issues to our knowledge.

The next incarnation of 'The Ghost Who Walks' in a UK publication was in 1992 and modesty forbids us as the co-publishers/editors of this comic from saying more on the subject.

In 2006, however, a couple of Australian 'Phantom' phanatics and Bryan Sheldon published on-line at www.deepwoods.org/wolf.html a ' piece called 'The Phantom: A Publishing History in England' and agreed to let us use the part about our 'Wolf Phantom' publication in this article.

They write:

The Phantom (1992-93) Wolf Publishing

In July 1992. 'The Phantom' was resurrected as a regular series in England by Wolf Publishing of London (editorial offices in Birmingham). Selling for a mere 99p, each 36 page full colour monthly issue reprinted original stories created by the team >

ART OPPOSITE:
(TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT):
JOHN RIDGWAY
DEAN ORMSTON
MIKE HIGGS

(CENTRE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT):
MIKE COLLINS & JAQUELINE ROACH
DEAN ORMSTON
MARK FARMER

(BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT):
BRETT EWINGS (WITH BACKGROUND DECORATION & COLOURING BY MIKE HIGGS)
DEAN ORMSTON

PHANTOM
THE PHANTOM
THE PHANTOM
THE PHANTOM
THE PHANTOM
THE PHANTOM

The PHANTOM
By LEE FALK and SY BARRY
FATHER.. TO PORT.. PIRATES!
ALL HANDS ON DECK!
BONG BONG BONG
OVER 400 YEARS AGO ... THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF A PIRATE RAID.. WASHED UP ON A REMOTE BANGALLA BEACH...
FRIENDLY PYGMIES CARRY HIM PAST AN ANCIENT IDOL... TOWARDS A CAVE CARVED BY THE WIND AND RAIN OF CENTURIES...
THE PYGMIES NURSE HIM TO HEALTH... LATER. ON THE BEACH.. HE FINDS THE BODY OF THE PIRATE WHO KILLED HIS FATHER...
ON THE SKULL OF THE KILLER.. HE SWEARS THE OATH... HE WAS THE FIRST PHANTOM.
HIS DESCENDANTS DO FOLLOW HIM... IN EVERY GENERATION. JUNGLE FOLK AND SEAFARERS... THINK HIM THE SAME MAN...
THE PHANTOM.. THE GHOST WHO WALKS..
SO GREW THE LEGEND OF IMMORTALITY... NOW.. OUR PHANTOM... 21st OF THE LINE... NEMESIS OF EVIL-DOERS.. HE FIGHTS ALONE!
CONT'D
PHANTOM
By LEE FALK
The PHANTOM
ILLUSTRATED COMIC
No 1
9D
68 PAGES

of writers and artists commissioned by by Semic of Sweden. The comics were printed in England and local artists created the excellent covers. The publishers were wise not to rely on the British market, and the series was distributed to comic shops in the USA and Australia.

The first four issues were sold as limited collectors' editions, and can be recognised by a number printed at the top left-hand corner of the third page. Various issues included editorials dealing with the Defenders of Earth animated TV series, other Phantom comics seen in England, the 1943 Phantom serial, and Phantom merchandise. Biographical details were also given for each of the writers and artists. Reader letters were published in issues four, five and six. The Wolf Phantom comics were obviously a hit with many fans judging by the reader response. Issue 8 included a pack of 'Battlecards' taped to the front cover, and a two-page promotional spread inside the comic.

Unfortunately, the series was not profitable and was cancelled before the end of its first year. The last issue (9) was a limited edition for subscribers. Each was individually numbered and signed by the editors and cover artists. Unnumbered and unsigned copies were also sold through the comic shops. This last edition was the only one not printed in colour. Would you believe that Wolf's publishing partner Redan pulled the plug on The Phantom in favour of the children's titles Super Ted and Thomas the Tank Engine?

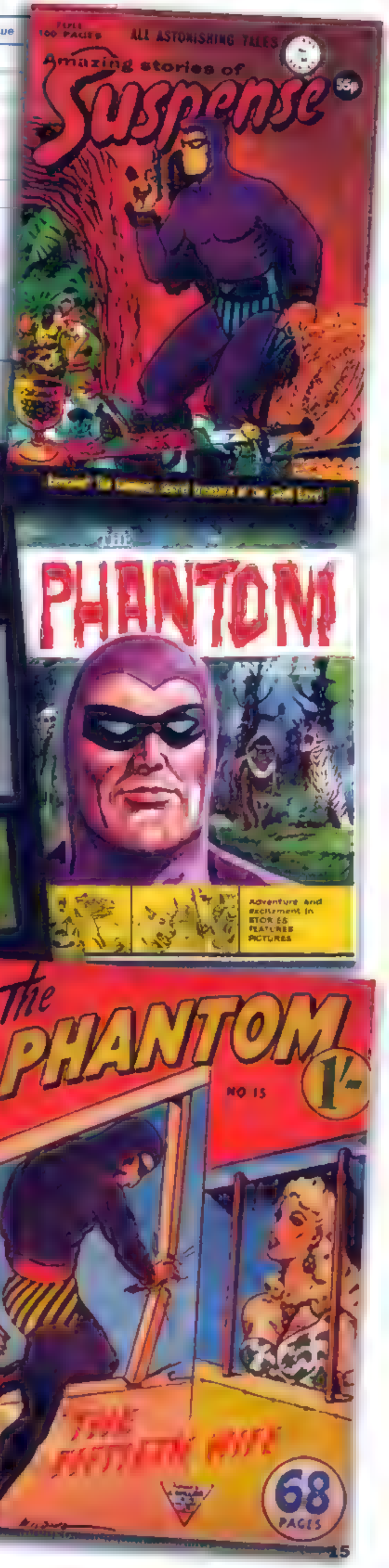
With the launch of their first issue, Wolf Publishing established a Phantom Society with free membership to subscribers to the comic. The membership kit included a badge, card, diploma, and an uncut sheet of Phantom trading cards. Unfortunately the club dissolved with the failure of the series.

In 2006, The Phantom Society and Ugly Duckling Press published Wolf Phantom Classic Comic Selection. This is a compilation book consisting of unsold copies of the Wolf Phantom comics glued together with a new outside cover, and some extra editorial pages in a limited release of only 500 books (each issue is individually numbered).

Each issue contains only six of the original nine comics. Due to the varying quantity of each number available for selection, contents may be different in some copies. Most seem to contain issues 1,2,3,5,6 and 9. The book is currently being sold via ebay for £10 Our

Issue	Cover Artist	Story Title	Writer	Artist	Original Source	Frew Issue
1	Mike Higgs	Marneland Drug Menace	Michael Tierres	Romano Felmang	Fantomen Nr 1 1991	n.p
2	John Ridgeway	The Boy from the Sea	Donne Avenall	Carlos Cruz	Fantomen Nr 3 1991	#985
3	Brett Ewins	Redbeard the Traitor	Michael Tierres	George Oleson	Fantomen Nr 4 1991	#998
4	Mark Farmer	Tights, Camera - Action	Sverre Ames	Cesar Spadari	Fantomen Nr 5 1991	#1416
5	Dean Ormston	Monster Mayhem	Norman Worker	Hans Lindahl	Fantomen Nr 11 1991	#1027
6	Mike Collins	Winter of the Wolf	Sverre Ames	Cesar Spadari	Fantomen Nr 15 1991	#1032
7	Dean Ormston	The Secret of the Colossus (Part 1)	Scott Goodall	Kari Leppanen	Fantomen Nr 13 1991	#1024
8	Dean Ormston	The Secret of the Colossus (Part 2	Scott Goodall	Kari Leppanen	Fantomen Nr 14 1992	#1025
9	Dean Ormston	The Stolen Ring The Girl Phantom The Saboteurs	Lee Falk Bill Lignante Lee Falk	Sy Barry Bill Lignante Ray Moore	S100 King Mandrake #4 S5	

Note: All of the above Fantomen stories have been reprinted in the Australian Frew Phantom comic (usually with different titles), except for 'Marneland Drug Menace'. The corresponding Frew editions for the other stories are shown above in the last column of the table.



thanks to messers. Griffin and Shedden for the use of their copy which helps illustrate how diversely international The Phantom has become. An American strip that continues to be very popular in Australasia and Scandinavia as well as being published in many other languages around the world. New material is still being published in America by Moonstone Publishing and in Scandinavia by Semic. It will be interesting to see where the 'Ghost Who Walks' makes his next appearance in our 'neck of the woods'. ●

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WOLF PUBLISHING'S PHANTOM CLUB BADGE DESIGNED BY MIKE HIGGS

CHARLEY'S WAR

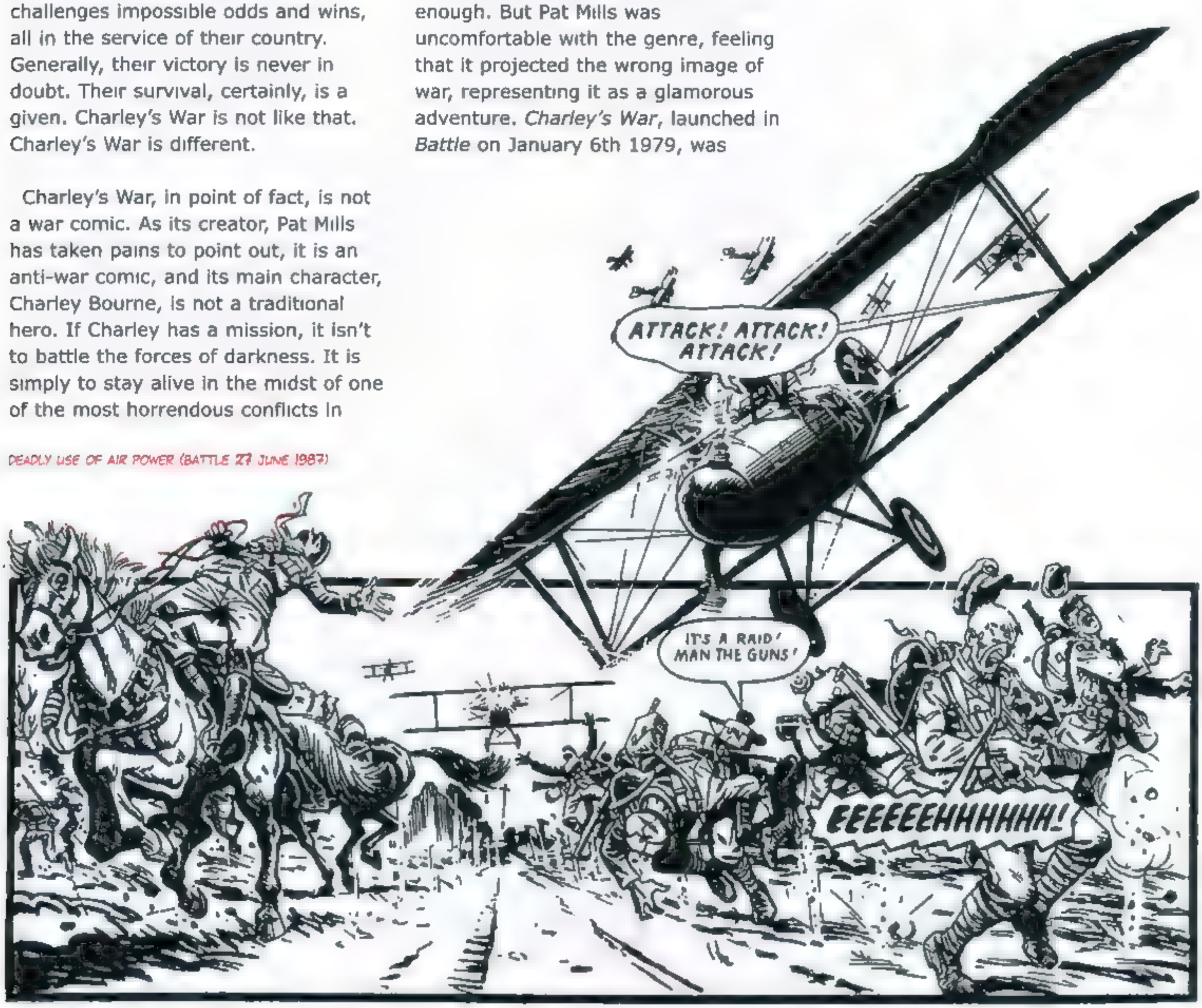
THE LIFE & TIMES OF PRIVATE BOURNE

BY TONY INGRAM

War comics have been something of a tradition in Britain for decades, of course, and many and varied are the type of stories told-superficially, at least. In practice though, whether set on land, sea or in the air, these tales have all tended to follow a fairly basic formula. There is a heroic (or sometimes deliberately anti-heroic) protagonist who faces insurmountable perils and surmounts them, who challenges impossible odds and wins, all in the service of their country. Generally, their victory is never in doubt. Their survival, certainly, is a given. Charley's War is not like that. Charley's War is different.

Charley's War, in point of fact, is not a war comic. As its creator, Pat Mills has taken pains to point out, it is an anti-war comic, and its main character, Charley Bourne, is not a traditional hero. If Charley has a mission, it isn't to battle the forces of darkness. It is simply to stay alive in the midst of one of the most horrendous conflicts in human history - the First World War, the so called 'Great War'.

When *Battle Picture Weekly* was launched on 8th March 1975, it was intended simply to compete with DC Thomson's hugely successful Warlord title. It contained the usual compliment of jingoistic heroes fighting their way across the many theatres of World War II, and the readers liked it well enough. But Pat Mills was uncomfortable with the genre, feeling that it projected the wrong image of war, representing it as a glamorous adventure. *Charley's War*, launched in *Battle* on January 6th 1979, was specifically written to provide a balance to this view, and it does it remarkably well; so well, in fact, that it has been called the greatest British comic strip ever created. That last may be debatable, but Charley's War is certainly something special, even if Charley himself is quite deliberately depicted as anything but.

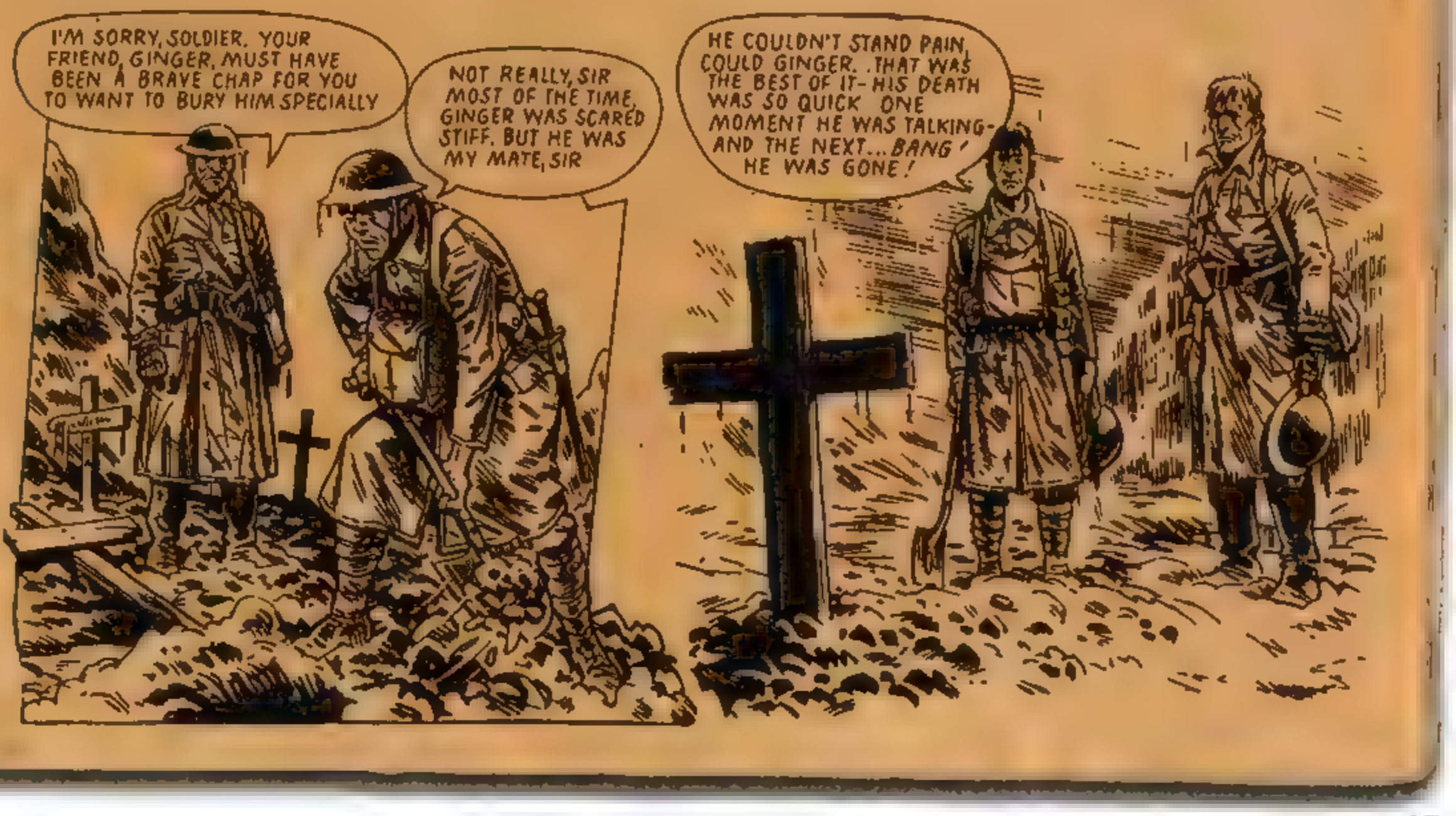


DEADLY USE OF AIR POWER (BATTLE 27 JUNE 1987)

SEPTEMBER, 1916 THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME CONTINUED W.TH ITS TERR.BLE DEATH TOLL AS A YOUNG SOLDIER, CHARLEY BOURNE, WALKED GRIMLY THROUGH THE TRENCHES ..
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THAT BAG, SOLDIER ? IF YOU'VE BEEN STEALING SUPPLIES ..
CHARLEY DID NOT REPLY HE WALKED ON LIKE A MAN IN A WORLD OF H S OWN
I'LL ASK YOU AGAIN, SOLDIER / WHAT HAVE YOU GOT IN THAT BAG ?
MY MATE - SIR MY MATE, GINGER

Charley Bourne is not one of that breed of supermen to which *Bond* and *Biggles* belong. He is neither particularly brave nor particularly bright (indeed, at times he can be unutterably thick), but this is the character's strength rather than a failing. Charley is everyman, an immediately identifiable figure from the moment we first meet him as a sixteen year old, lying about his age to join the army because he's just been sacked from his job due to a malicious practical joke by his workmates. From the beginning, it is apparent that Charley is not the sharpest knife in the box, and it is equally apparent from the behaviour of the recruiting officers, who accept a clearly underage boy and are pleased that he isn't too bright because "you don't need to be clever to fight in the trenches", that this strip will take a more than usually cynical view of its subject matter. Set as it is in the trenches (initially in 1916, shortly before the Battle of the Somme) it might seem at first that there would be little opportunity for action and derring-do (a fact pointed out by artist Joe Colquhoun when he was assigned to the strip), but then that isn't what Charley's War is about. Though there is indeed action and Charley does get to be a hero, the true villains of the piece are not the Germans but the Generals.

The strip, beautifully drawn by Colquhoun (whose work is amazingly


I'M SORRY, SOLDIER. YOUR FRIEND, GINGER, MUST HAVE BEEN A BRAVE CHAP FOR YOU TO WANT TO BURY HIM SPECIALLY
NOT REALLY, SIR MOST OF THE TIME, GINGER WAS SCARED STIFF. BUT HE WAS MY MATE, SIR
HE COULDN'T STAND PAIN, COULD GINGER. . THAT WAS THE BEST OF IT - HIS DEATH WAS SO QUICK ONE MOMENT HE WAS TALKING - AND THE NEXT... BANG ! HE WAS GONE !

detailed and evocative throughout), never shies away from presenting uncomfortable home truths. We see soldiers on both sides of the conflict as people, with all-too human failings as well as strengths. We see cowardice unredeemed, we see petty cruelties, and we see that the good guys don't always win.

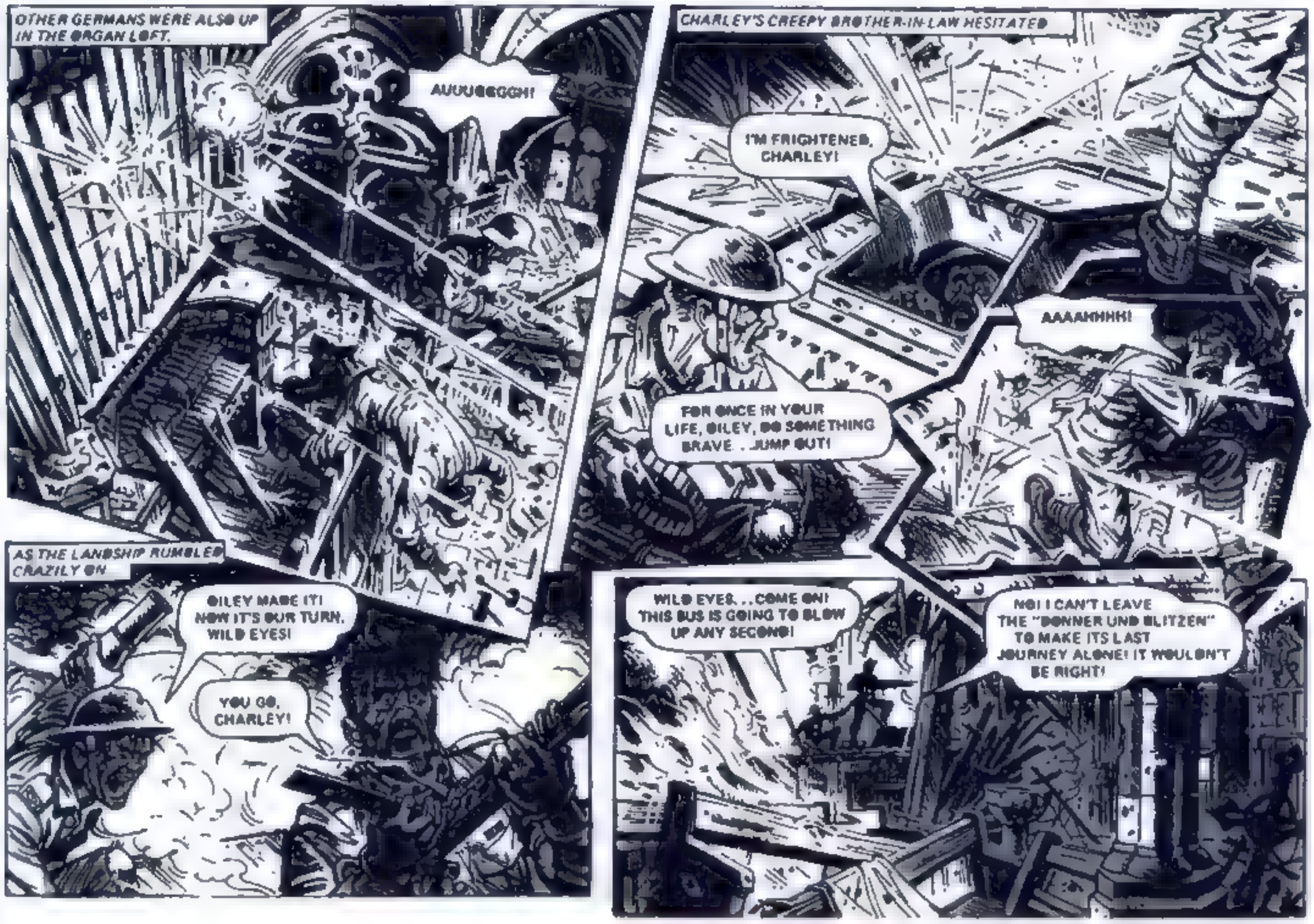
CHARLEY'S PAL OILEY CONTEMPLATES HIS FUTURE...
AS A TANK CRUISED VICTORIOUSLY DOWN THE STREET
YES CHARLEY'S RIGHT FOR ONCE IN MY LIFE I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING BRAVE!
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY I CAN GET OUT OF THIS STINKING WAR IT—IT WON'T BE EASY BUT CHARLEY WILL COVER UP FOR ME I KNOW HE LIKES ME – REALLY!

Charley's best pal, Ginger, is a cynic whose constant cry is "I aint a hero", and indeed, when a box of live hand grenades literally falls into his lap at one point, his immediate reaction is to chuck the box to Charley to get rid of it! Other characters are similarly flawed, like 'Weeper' Watkins (so called because his eyes run constantly since he was exposed to poison gas), who deserts from the front, or Charley's cowardly and conniving brother-in-law 'Oily', who arranges for a tank to run over his toes in order to be sent back to Britain. And yet, when Charley's platoon are ordered to execute their commanding officer for cowardice after he orders his men to retreat from certain death, 'Weeper' joins Charley in slinging down his gun and refusing to take part in the firing squad. There is heroism in Charley's War; it just sometimes takes an unexpected form. It also frequently has unfortunate consequences. Charley and Weeper's act of defiance results in them being subjected to Field Punishment number one, the most brutal form of punishment used by the British army at the time; they are effectively crucified on a gun wheel during the day, and subjected to brutal beatings by a sadistic sergeant, 'the Beast'. When a German air attack brings their punishment to an unexpected end, Charley allows 'the Beast' to burn to death, very definitely a departure from the heroic ideal. The strip never balks at showing the brutality of war either, as we see men blinded by poison gas or with limbs blown off by shellfire (though never overly graphic in its depiction of such injuries, Colquhoun's art nonetheless conveys perfectly the horror of them).

The depiction of Field Punishment number one, a sadistic punishment seemingly sanctioned by the British army, is only one of the more disturbing practices exposed by Mills, whose writing on this strip is unashamedly antiauthoritarian. We see the effects of shell shock, and how badly sufferers could be treated. We see the madness of ordering thousands of men to walk into a hail of gunfire in order to secure a few feet of ground which they could lose again tomorrow, the arrogance of aristocratic soldiers

THE "JUDGEMENT TROOPERS" THROUGH THE BRITISH TRENCH WERE NOW POISED FOR THE ROUGH'
SAVE THE GUNS! SAVE THE GUNS AT ALL COSTS!
DESPERATELY, THE ARTILLERY DRAGGED THEIR GUNS FROM THE BATTLEFIELD

A MASTER OF LAYOUT AND COMPOSITION, JOE COLQUHOUN DEPICTS THE FEROCITY AND DRAMA OF WAR


OTHER GERMANS WERE ALSO UP IN THE ORGAN LOFT.
AUUUGGGH!
CHARLEY'S CREEPY BROTHER-IN-LAW HESITATED
I'M FRIGHTENED, CHARLEY!
AAAAHHHH!
FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, OILEY, DO SOMETHING BRAVE . . JUMP OUT!
AS THE LANDSHIP RUMBLED CRAZILY ON
OILEY MADE IT! NOW IT'S OUR TURN, WILD EYES!
YOU GO, CHARLEY!
WILD EYES. . . COME ON! THIS BUS IS GOING TO BLOW UP ANY SECOND!
NO! I CAN'T LEAVE THE "DONNER UND BLITZEN" TO MAKE ITS LAST JOURNEY ALONE! IT WOULDN'T BE RIGHT!

NO PLACE IS SAFE IN WAR . . EVEN THE INTERIOR OF A CHURCH

like Charley's nemesis Captain Snell, who consider the common fighting men totally expendable, and (through the dramatic device of letters exchanged between Charley and his family) the ignorance of those left at home who have been fed lies about the state of the war and see in black and white an issue that is really many shades of grey. The execution of Lt Thomas for cowardice when the man is clearly a hero, and the fact that it is his own men who are ordered to kill the man to whom they owe their lives, is hard hitting-but no less so are the reactions of the men who carry out the order, too afraid or too conditioned to disobey. And we are made uncomfortably aware that life is cheap in war, and that these are real people dying. Ginger, set up from the start as Charley's constant companion and therefore a character the reader would expect to be untouchable, dies within months. What's more, his death is neither heroic nor long

IN A PERFECT WORLD, ALL JOE COLQUHOUN'S FANTASTIC ARTWORK FEATURING CHARLEY'S WAR WOULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN FULL COLOUR. IN A PERFECT WORLD THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO NEED. (BATTLE WITH STORM FORCE, 27 JUNE 1987)

dwelt on. He is pointlessly blown up at the end of an episode, with no warning and with no enemy in sight. The next episode begins with Charley collecting his remains in a sack for burial, and when an officer remarks that Ginger must have been something special to inspire such an action, Charley replies truthfully "not really, sir. But he was my mate".

The creators used Charley's War as much as a historical documentary as an adventure serial, though it is done in such a way that the reader is not really too aware of it-the action keeps the strip from seeming like an extended lecture. We travel with Charley and his mates through the major events of the war and see many of the iniquities of it through his eyes, as with the often inhumane treatment of wounded men by doctors who had effectively been instructed >

ONCE UPON A TIME IN A BRITAIN LONG GONE, WE THRILLED TO THE EXPLOITS OF BOMBER BRADDOCK AND KING COBRA, LAUGHED WITH CHEEKY, SWINER AND THE SPARKY PEOPLE. THOSE STRIPS ARE GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, AND THOSE GREAT COMICS AND THEIR CRAZY CHARACTERS ARE ALL HERE, AT ALBION BRITISH COMICS!

WHETHER YOU'RE A FAN OF FISHBOY OR SILLY ABOUT SID'S SNAKE, ABC HAS SOMETHING FOR YOU. WE HAVE HUNDREDS OF ISSUES OF DOZENS OF TITLES!

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SO IF YOU'RE TRYING TO FILL IN THAT GAP IN YOUR COLLECTION, OR JUST WANT TO RECAPTURE A CHUNK OF YOUR CHILDHOOD, CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE, LOG INTO E-BAY OR JUST DROP ME A LINE WITH YOUR WANTS LIST.

LET US TAKE YOU BACK TO THAT BRITAIN OF LONG AGO!

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"THEN THE GERMANS BREACHED ONE SIDE OF THE FORT"
VORWARTS! THIS TIME THE FORT IS OURS!
"WE DROVE THEM OFF WITH BOMBS AND BAYONETS. RAMON USED HIS BARE HANDS"
ADIOS, BOCHE PIG!
THEY SHALL NOT PASS!
"THE LONG SIEGE WENT ON. WE DARED NOT EAT OUR SALT MEAT. WOULD HAVE ONLY MADE OUR THIRST WORSE THEN"
BLUE - GET YOUR FRIEND KROTOWSKI OUT OF THE OBSERVATION TURRET! I'VE GOT TO SIGNAL FORT SOUVILLE!
OH, NO! WHAT'S HE DOING UP THERE NOW?
THE CRAZY FOOL'S TRYING TO BUY WATER OFF THE GERMANS!
SACRE MECK!
YOU CAN HAVE ALL THIS MONEY JUST FOR A LITTLE WATER AND MY WATCH, TOO! IT'S A GOOD WATCH - IT'S GERMAN!
NO THANKS, SOLDIER! WE'RE GOING TO GET IT ALL WHEN YOU'RE DEAD! WE CAN AFFORD TO WAIT!
JUST A DROP OF WATER... PLEASE! PLEASE!
COME ON, KROTOWSKI... LET'S GO!
LEAVE ME ALONE, BLUE! I THINK THEY'RE READY TO MAKE A DEAL!
DON'T BE CRAZY! COME ON! IF THE COMMANDANT FINDS OUT WHAT YOU'RE DOING, YOU'LL BE SHOT!
THE STRIP PORTAYED THE SENSE OF FEAR AND DISREGARD FOR HUMAN LIFE - ON BOTH SIDES

'Blue', the conscientious objector Budgie Brown or Charley's seafaring brother Jack. Charley's own story develops, too, as the war progresses. He marries a nurse, loses a brother, and is even promoted to Lance Corporal. Eventually, Charley's War ends as peace breaks out, our humble hero having somehow survived to tell the tale.

Sadly, Pat Mills never got the chance to end Charley's War as he'd intended. His plan had been to have Charley's story conclude with the unlucky Bourne back home and on the dole in 1933, naively looking forward to a brighter future as a newspaper headline announces Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany. But Mills had a falling out with the publishers over his research budget and so, Scott Goodall took over the strip, bringing Charley into World War II. Out of his natural environment and without his creator's guiding hand, Charley was a fish out of water and the strip floundered, ending on October 4th 1985 with Charley and his son being evacuated from Dunkirk (later issues of *Battle* would reprint the early strips, though sometimes slightly censored).

to pronounce them fit to return to duty when they clearly weren't. At other times, Mills needs to show us events that occurred in places other than Charley's usual trench environment, and these are the comparatively few occasions on which Charley gets to travel. At one point, for instance, he is injured and gets home leave, allowing us to see the distorted version of the war presented to civilians back home, and the realities of life in the East End. Charley's mother works in a munitions factory and has become a 'canary', one of the women whose skin was turned yellow by their work making shells (jaundice was frequently fatal). His brother-in-law, the revolting Oily, loots the bodies of those killed when a munitions factory is blown up by a Zeppelin raid. And we meet Blind Bob, a Crimean War veteran who has been condemned to the workhouse by an uncaring world, but whose sharp ears are pressed into service warning of the approaching Zeppelins. All of these events, though fictionalised, are based on reality, meticulously researched by Mills and Colquhoun. Where Charley could not logically be present for something Mills wants to write about though, there is no shoehorning him into any unlikely scenarios; we simply see events through the eyes of another character for awhile, as in the case of the French Foreign Legion deserter,

Still, even now-more than twenty years after its slightly unsatisfactory conclusion-Charley's War remains a classic, one of the most significant (if too often overlooked) strips ever published in Britain.

Well done, soldier. ●

(TOP RIGHT): WINNER OF THE FANCY DRESS CONTEST WAS THE CYCLOPS, SECRET IDENTITY UNKNOWN, WHO HAD HIS CHOICE OF ORIGINAL ARTWORK BY NEAL ADAMS OR STEVE DITKO!(COURTESY OF DC COMICS, EVEN WAY BACK THEN!).

(RIGHT): PHIL CLARKE AS CAPTAIN MARVEL WITH CARL BROOKES AS THE BLACK TERROR AND NICK LANDAU AS CAPTAIN COLD (WHO GOT 2ND PLACE IN THE FANCY DRESS CONTEST).

THE FIRST BRITISH COMIC CONVENTION 40TH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIES

BY PHIL CLARKE

(ABOVE): STEVE MOORE HOLDS UP A PRINTER'S SHEET AIDED BY BRAM STOKES.
(RIGHT): SHRINKING VIOLET BRAM STOKES FLASHES HIS T-SHIRT, WHILE PAT COMISSIONG WONDERS IF HE SHOULD FLASH HIS CAMERA.

Before British comic fans became organised and came to expect things like comic shops, comic marts and comic conventions, there was nothing! Chance meetings with people of similar interests were the order of the day. Then in the mid-1960s, comic fanzines started to appear in profusion and as a result of names and addressed being made available in the letters columns of these 'zines, fans started communicating with each other. Science Fiction had an established fandom movement and many comics fans gravitated around the fringes because Science Fiction and fantasy were similar to their own interests. It was at the *1964 World Science Fiction Convention* in London that thoughts of a comic convention were nurtured.

Steve Moore, later to be a comics scripter had recently met Phil Clarke, later to be comic shop retailer and publisher, who renewed his friendship with Mike Higgs, later to become a comic strip artist, who all met for drinks with Derek 'Bram' Stokes who started comic shops rolling with his fabled 'Dark They Were and Golden Eyed'.

Phil Clarke and Steve Moore didn't let go of that early dream and were determined to do something about it. They got together whenever possible and planned, raised funds, etc and four years later the first ever *British Comics Convention* took place in Birmingham. The lead-up to that auspicious occasion was as follows:

The convention was mentioned in fanzines of the time including 'Ka-Pow' and 'Heroes Unlimited' and a few US fanzines. Mentions in 'Floor of 64', the editorial page of 'POW!'

and 'SMASH!'. These were quite frequent because 'Sunny Steve Moore' had a job with Odhams on editorial.

Next came an A4 spirit duplicated flyer for inserting into fanzines. The artwork for the flyer was by a prominent fanzine artist at the time, the late Ken Simpson. It was produced on Steve Moore's spirit duplicator which also produced the first two issues of our fanzine 'Ka-Pow!'

The publicity meant that we sold 47 advance tickets included five registered as non-attending. One of these was a young Alan Moore of Northampton. The final count of tickets sold was 70.

We had 5 professionals attending. They were Mike Higgs, Jim Baikie, Paul Neary (Artists),Steve Moore (*Odhams* editorial) and Milton Finesilver (*CityMagazines* editorial).

The card convention badge was by Mike Higgs, who also produced the covers to two advance info 'zines, which were spirit duplicated and were basically sales lists to raise money for the convention.

The magazine published after the convention had a cover by Jim Baikie and interior art by Mike Higgs, Ken Simpson and Paul Neary. Full Page greetings were reproed from a US fanzine 'great' Biljo White and *Marvel Comics*' Stan Lee. The convention auction was run by Mike Higgs who was drawing 'The Cloak' at the time. The program was filled with playing tape recordings of old radio shows, showing serials, feature films, panel discussions and talks. There was even amidnight DUM-DUM (for Tarzan fans) which caused the odd complaint about noise.

Highlight of Saturday evening was the fancy dress parade where fans could dress as their favourite characters in home-made costumes. That early convention was a small landmark in the history of British Comics fandom and I am proud to have been part of it. ●

(LEFT): IT'S THAT MAN AGAIN AS CAPTAIN MARVEL READING UP ON THE OPPOSITION!
ARE YOU ONE OF THIS HAPPY THRONG? LET US KNOW!
LEFT TO RIGHT WE HAVE BRIAN WOOLEY, PHIL CLARKE, STEVE MOORE AND BOB POOLE

AVENGING ARTIST

THE FORGOTTEN ARTWORK OF EMILIO FREJO ABEGON

BY GLENN B FLEMING

In the background of any endeavour we find the unsung heroes. Those individuals who labour selflessly, for little pay and far less praise as they remain committed to satisfying an artistic urge that drives them on when saner people would simply give up. Emilio Frejo is one unsung hero and this article is in honour of him, his work and his labour.

M.E.N. AT WORK

Illustrating such iconic characters as John steed and Emma Peel would be a daunting task for any artist. The faces of the characters from the 1960s TV show The Avengers are known worldwide and it would seem, therefore, that such an extraordinary show would receive the best in illustration when it was decided to produce a comic strip series. With the linework of Emilio Frego it obviously did but it was not always so.

The Avengers had previously appeared in comic strip form in the Manchester Evening News (and other newspapers), as a black and white endeavour, complete with scratchy artwork and a scratchy script.

EMILIO FREJO ABEGON

Three panels a day is a hard task master, moving the story along whilst engaging the reader - not much room to develop character and background and It's not said for nothing that to successfully write and draw a daily adventure newspaper strip is touching the work of genius. While that statement may be a little exaggerated, it certainly has some ring of truth. The newspaper strip was popular but short lived - running from February 1964 to September of the same year. The Avengers in strip form silently slipped away.

But not for long. >

THE AVENGERS

JOHN STEED and Mrs Emma Peel, "The Avengers" are secretly investigating a mysterious character known as "The Miser", who has threatened to rob all the banks in London.

The Miser has already shown his power by fusing all the lights in London's West End, and by sending a trainload of people, all drugged, crashing into the barriers at Victoria Station.

Dick North, a friend of the "Avengers" who was on the train at the time, takes them to the stretch of railway track where he reckons the train had been halted by persons unknown — and while looking for clues, Mrs Peel is attacked by three hooded men.

Steed and Nick North heard the sound of the scuffle and hurried to the spot — but they were too late.

Meanwhile, the three hooded men dragged Mrs Peel into an old, tumble-down farmhouse.

YOU GO BACK TO LONDON, DICK I'M STAYING TO HAVE A LOOK ROUND FOR THE VANISHING MRS PEEL THINGS DON'T GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT — WITHOUT A VERY GOOD REASON

But behind the tumble-down exterior, Emma was amazed to see a highly-modernised laboratory with all the very latest electronic equipment

Suddenly the high-pitched voice of The Miser came over a loud speaker

LOCK OUR INTERFERING MRS PEEL IN THE CELLARS. I WILL DEAL WITH HER WHEN OUR WORK HERE IS FINISHED

As he reached a corn field, Steed stopped, his eyes fixed on a bird about to land on an old scarecrow.

SO THAT'S WHAT THE WELL DRESSED, SCARECROW IS WEARING! THAT BIRD DOESN'T SEEM TO MIND

Suddenly the bird sheered off as a great jet of flame shot out of the scarecrow towards Steed

ARTWORK FROM DIANA 12

DIANA MEET... DIANA!

Comics publishing giant DC Thomson took advantage of the demise of the newspaper strip, recognised its potential and pooled their expertise in producing high quality comics to produce one of the greatest colour strips of the 1960s. Steed and Emma were back - and how!

The new (not New) Avengers strip appeared in issues 199 through to 224 of Diana - 'the popular paper for girls'. Diana was a girls' comic (the clue being in the title) and therefore, at first glance, a strange place to put an illustrated adaptation of one of the most successful action-packed TV shows ever - or was it? After all, the show had appeal for both sexes - and Emma Peel was a girl, wasn't she?!

DC Thomson editors were using a number of overseas artists at that time and that's when Emilio Frejo Abegon literally came in to the frame. After being given the script for the strip with maybe a few observations, requests and ideas from the writer, Abegon would then settle down and contemplate the task ahead.

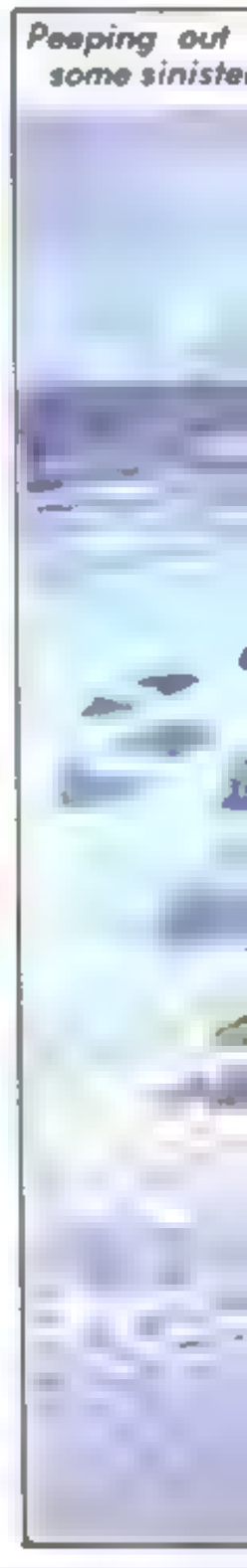
RECREATING THE AVENGERS

He would rough out the layout and fix the look of his pages lightly in pencil on the artboard, at the same time working out where best to place the dialogue and captions. He'd change things around, re-draw and re-juggle the composition of his panels. His editor would have some input at all stages, nurturing the talent to produce his best work.

Then the artist would begin to tighten up the pencil work, moving from panel to panel, never settling on one for too long. Abegon would work them all up so, at last, they would be all finished at more or less the same time.

Satisfied with the overall composition and storytelling, he would then work them up in colour using gouache, water colour or coloured inks before using a brush loaded with black ink to put down a firm line around the illustrations. Depending on the overall effect, he might decide to leave the line out completely letting the colour or the white board itself, show the form.

HOLD IT, STEED. DON'T MOVE ANOTHER INCH! LOOK — IN THE SHINGLE DEAD AHEAD.
When everybody had gone, Steed and Mrs Peel set out across the beach.



The next trick was to capture their likeness while still producing a drawing 'loose' enough to be considered one's own rendition. Abegon does this perfectly with his Avengers strip, produced here in print for the first time since its last publication date of June 1967.

Abegon obviously uses photographic reference while still showing his skill as an artist. Ahead of its time, equalled only by a few, Abegon's work stands head and shoulders above most of what was being produced for British publication in the '60s His sense of line, composition and colouring are a joy to see. His mixture of panel shapes, though not totally uncommon to the era, is vibrant and exciting. Moreover, unlike their American counterparts, British comics such as TV21 and Ranger didn't employ the use of sound effects. Abegon (and other artists such as Frank Bellamy and Ron Embleton) would use jagged panels for explosions and violence to emphasise a particular part of the action.

CHALLENGE

Abegon's composition is second to none and he exploits this talent unmercifully and to great effect. Yet another unique aspect of Abegon's Avengers strip is that, as it was published in full colour and actually prempted the TV show's first colour transmission in the UK. >

om the shingle were
ooking metal objects.
WHAT ARE THEY, STEED? I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THEM.
NOR DO I. IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, WE'VE JUST WALKED INTO THE MIDDLE OF A MINE-FIELD!

PREPARE FOR ACTION MRS PEEL. OUR FRIENDS ARE COMING TO INVESTIGATE
DUCK MRS PEEL! WATCH THAT HAT
NOT SO FAST MR MAD HATTER YOU'RE INVITED TO OUR PARTY
THERE ALL CLUES AND HERE'S YOUR EVIDENCE BUT WATCH HOW YOU HANDLE THESE HATS THEY'RE VERY TRICKY INDEED.
WHAT THE WHO
DON'T MOVE AN INCH WHY YOU STEED
GLAD TO HAVE YOU ABOARD MRS PEEL EVIDENTLY YOU WERE ABOUT TO SPY ON OUR GUESTS NO HUM GREAT MINDS THINK ALIKE AMIN'T JOHN YOU?

ARTWORK (TOP TO BOTTOM) FROM DIANA 6,11 & 35

For an artist to capture the 'feel' of the series so successfully gives us a glimpse of the talent involved. Translating an action-spy series from the box to the panel is not easy. Even comic greats such as Jack Kirby and Gil Kane, both extremely talented American comic artists, failed in their efforts to transpose The Prisoner into their chosen medium.

Abegon produced his work with more than a little help from his colleague Juan Gonzalez Alacrejo and, although the scripting on The Avengers is at times, let's say - less than thrilling, the sheer beauty of the art holds an otherwise poor story together.

Each episode of The Avengers strip was a full six pages, long enough for any accomplished writer to get to the point. Alas, the writer on this series lacked a sense of narrative and somehow, er, lost

ARTWORK FROM DIANA 5 (TOP) & 7

the plot. Maybe by a simple stroke of fortunate no credit appeared for the writer either.

This beautiful artwork, its impact waiting silently for all to see, languishes somewhere in the vaults of DC Thomson, beset and stifled by copyright problems and kept from view of the general, Avengers-loving public. For over forty years no-one outside DC Thomson has even looked at it.

ABEGON BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Emilio Frejo Abegon received little or no public recognition for his work (in Britain at least - his name does not appear on any of his Avengers artwork) and that has to be a shame.

To be fair to DC Thomson (and other publishers of note), artists and writers were rarely acknowledged for their efforts in those days of comic publishing.

Although, Abegon earned his living doing a job he no doubt loved, one can't help wondering how an artist of Abegon's talents would fair in today's market with its potential for copyright sharing, royalties and the return of artwork? Who knows

Abegon is now in his late seventies and his work is still shown in Galleries in Barcelona.

Enjoy the pages published here (by kind permission of our friends at DC Thomson) and revel in their simplicity. ●

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EXIT
I'VE LOST MY YOUNG SISTER. COULD YOU HOLD ON TO MY BALL WHILE I MAKE A PHONE CALL? I'LL BE BACK IN A JIFFY
WHAT'S WRONG SONNY? CAN I HELP TO DRY YOUR TEARS?
WHAT WAS THAT—
COLT!
THE AVENGERS
In which some light is shed on the subject—
ALLOW ME TO SWITCH ON YOUR SET MRS PEEL
I'M NOT A TELE'ISION ADDICT YOU KNOW BUT AN OLD FRIEND OF MINE TOM PARTRIDGE IS ON TONIGHT HE'S HEADING A PANEL OF EXPERTS WHO ARE LOOKING INTO A WEIRD NEW DISCOVERY
WE MEET AGAIN, MRS PEEL
Soon the motor launch set off for the mysterious island, with the Avengers hidden under a pile of rope and sailcloth.
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT MRS PEEL. STILL WE'LL GET THE FULL STORY TOMORROW EVENING TOM HAS INVITED US TO DINNER
At a little jetty on the island, the occupants of the motor boat clambered ashore and headed across a single beach towards a house perched high on a cliff
HELLO THERE. WE'VE ARRIVED. ANYONE AT HOME?

ARTWORK FROM (TOP) DIANA 38, (CENTRE) 39 & (BOTTOM) 12

MICKEY MOUSE WEEKLY

or: How we Brits turned an American icon into a staple of British comicdom!

By Peter Hansen

When I was a kid I loved Christmas, and if you ask my mates Phil Clark or Mike Higgs they will tell you I haven't changed. To this day I still love anything to do with Christmas.

At home, when my boys were growing up, Christmas was special to me and we never ever went away for Christmas. Putting up the lights, decorating the tree, the traditional Christmas breakfast my wife cooked; I lapped it up

Like any kid growing up in the late Fifties and early Sixties, Christmas was all about waking up on Christmas morning with a stocking full of chocolate and tangerines, and your Christmas annuals at the bottom of the bed. I refused to open my presents and go out and play with the other kids in my street until I had read my Christmas annuals and choked on at least one tangerine as I tried to eat it whole! Of course I had to have the Christmas issues of my favorite comics with those fantastic snow clad covers. Captain Hurricane parachuting down for a scrap dressed as Santa Klaus, ah those were the days.

For most of my adult life I grew up singing the praises of those Fifties and Sixties Christmas comic covers, then, when I was in my 40s I stumbled across a bunch of Mickey Mouse comics from the 1940s on e-Bay. I bought them as a whim and when they arrived I was absolutely blown away by the cover from a wartime edition and by how 'British' it was in comparison to the American Mickey Mouse comics. I had no idea that this quality of colour and design even existed. I was hooked! I had to have more and the more issues I collected the more impressed I became by this comic.

Of course I tried my damnedest to get my hands on the Christmas issues but I couldn't help it, as a committed comic historian I eventually set about trying to find out as much as I could about the history of the comic. Even though I only scratched the surface, what I found out was an amazing story behind this

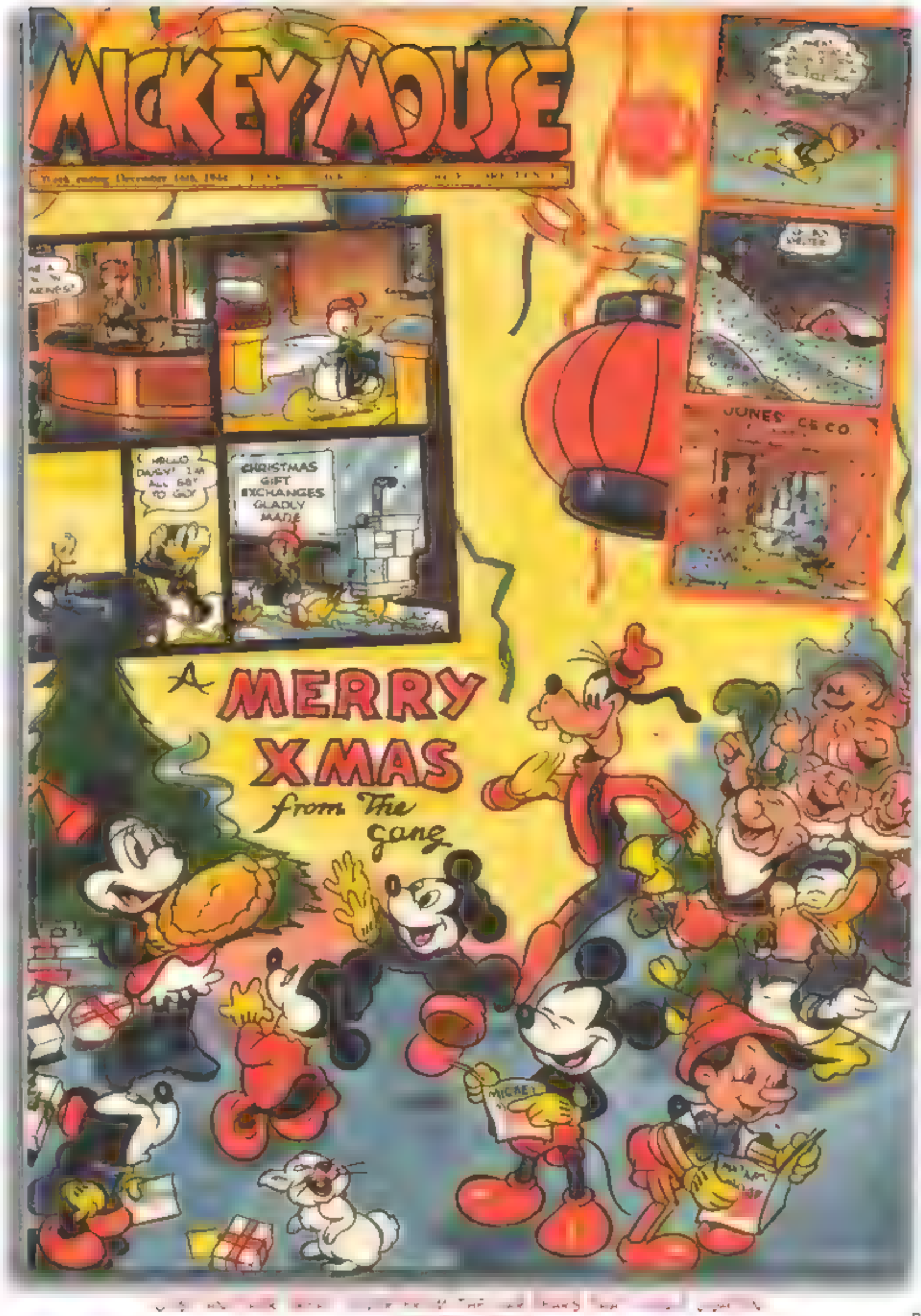
MICKEY MOUSE
Christmas Number
HELP WIN THE WAR LEAVE YOUR SCRAP METAL HERE
WAR INSIGNIA
ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE MARINE SECTION SOMEWHERE B.C.

AN XMAS COVER THAT IS NOT ONLY GREAT BUT MENTIONS CANADA WHERE I NOW LIVE!

almost forgotten British comic treasure.

TAKING THE MICK

Although the black and white animated Mickey Mouse films (Plane Crazy, Steamboat Willy etc.) arrived in the cinemas in Britain not long after they debuted in America, the first truly British Mickey Mouse item to be produced was the famous Dean & Son's Mickey Mouse Annual which hit the stores in 1930. This was a lavishly produced annual with great full colour covers, and at least for the first few annuals a spine decorated with Disney characters. These annuals led the Disney charge in Britain but up until 1935 didn't really have a significant impact. In fact with the exception of a syndicate strip in The Bristol Evening News, and rather surprisingly considering how things would turn out, a syndicate in The Modern Boy published by the giant Amalgamated Press, there was really nothing to speak of on a national scale.



However, everything changes in 1935 when along came William B. Levy who was the European Sales Director for Walt Disney Merchandise. The reasons for Disney deciding to get into the children's comic market in the UK is unclear but the best suggestion would seem to be that they somehow found out how lucrative the market was

The major boys' comics published at that time by Amalgamated Press (Film Fun, Comic Cuts and Illustrated Chips) were selling approximately 750,000 copies per week. In addition, the Sunday Funnies in Britain had developed into these stand alone comics, and there really were very few outlets for the Syndicated American material.

Whatever the actual reason, something convinced Levy that there should be a national children's' comic featuring all of the loveable Disney characters. From a business perspective it made sense since thousands of children visited the cinema each week to see the Disney cartoons (as did I when I was a kid, but not in the Thirties, of course!). Surely they would be happy to part with their hard earned pocket money to buy a weekly Disney comic and read the further adventures of their screen heroes? In hindsight this venture presented no risk at all, it simply couldn't fail, and it didn't!

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

First of all Mickey Mouse was a favourite with both boys and girls from nursery age up to early teens. This would give the new comic a wide-reaching audience beyond any other comic of the day. Once the d e was cast, all that remained was to recruit the staff necessary to produce the comic. This part of the British Mickey Mouse comic story turned out to be the most surprising of all

For reasons that were probably only known to Bill Levy and perhaps the Disney brothers they decided not to simply fill the comic with syndicated Disney strip material, but to recruit British artists and writers to produce new strips to run in the new comic. They also decided to make the comic a mixture of strips like the popular Film Fun comic of the day. So in the summer of 1935 a small advertisement appeared in the Daily Telegraph (and perhaps other newspapers) inviting applicants with cartoon experience or with latent talent to reply to a box number in the city. Successful applicants were invited for an interview with Willbank Publications which had a tiny head of Mickey Mouse incorporated into their lettering.

The interviews were conducted by Bill Levy and his 'financial assistant' Mr Rosenburg, and the new Art Editor, the artist Wilfred Haughton who was an obvious choice since he had been drawing the Mickey Mouse Dean annuals for five >

years. The following is a description by the late great British comic artist Basil Reynolds of the circumstances surrounding his appointment to the staff of the fledgling Disney comic.

'Early in 1935 I was on holiday sunning myself on a Norfolk beach, when I opened a letter from my father enclosing yet another cutting from the Daily Telegraph, his bible in such matters' (Reynolds father was a noted commercial artist of the day of the same name). 'This time a comic artist was required by the usual anonymous box number for unspecified work. I remember experiencing a slight flicker of interest, but the sun and the gentle lapping of the waves made any thought of work terribly remote, and I very nearly tore up the cutting. Which would indeed have been a pity, for that tiny scrap of paper was to lead me eventually to the pages of the mighty Mickey Mouse Weekly! As luck would have it after a couple of days I summoned up enough energy to scribble a reply to the advertisement, with scribble being the operative word. Years later I found my original letter deep in their files, and I still don't know how they ever managed to decipher it! I couldn't! My original letter to my first employer which got me my start in the industry had been boastful and untruthful enough, but this one was a real beauty, cataloguing all of my glorious achievements in some detail and leaving them in no doubt that the writer was an artistic genius they simply could not afford to miss! Strange to recount now, because I posted this load of bull then promptly forgot about it'

POSSIBLY MY FAVORITE MICKEY MOUSE XMAS COVER

'Eventually a letter arrived from Willbank Publications from a gentleman called Rosenberg stating that he would be pleased if I would call around with specimens of my work. This I duly did, climbing up the narrow staircase of a building in Shaftsbury Avenue. Willbank Publications consisted of two tiny rooms containing two people - the short balding Mr. Rosenburg and a tall bespectacled female receptionist. By the time I left, the rooms contained just one person, for the balding and obviously "short fused" Mr. Rosenberg had fired the receptionist amid much frenzied shouting and arm waving on his part and floods of tears from the unfortunate lady. Throughout this unexpected drama I stood as one transfixed, nervously clutching my portfolio (such as it was) wondering whether there was any point in my waiting to show the gentleman my miserable specimens - after all they could quite easily set him off again!'

'However all was well. When we were alone Mr. Rosenberg smiled broadly, displaying several gold teeth, shook me by the hand, apologized for his outburst and looked at my specimens. He then asked me to return in a few days time when William B. Levy of the Walt Disney organisation would be in the office to interview me'.

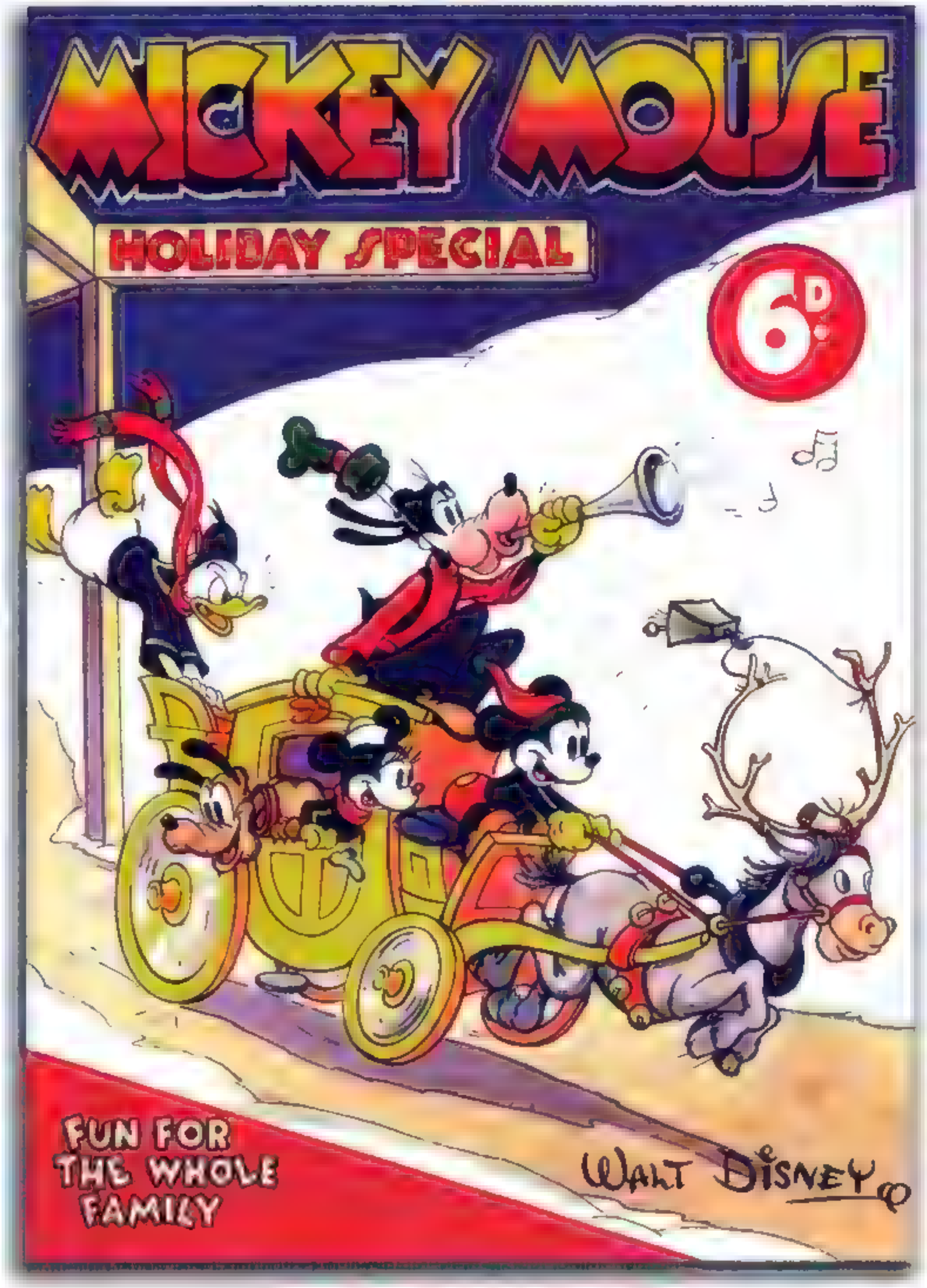
MEET THE GANG

'I scurried back to my drawing board and penciled out an idea for a page. My crude and hastily conceived offering I called 'Skit and Skat' (with the byline "The Worlds Smallest Cabin Boy and his Skatty Cat"). I took this up to London on the appointed day was duly introduced to William B. Levy for the first time by Mr. Rosenberg. Bald, pale and unsmiling, Levy glared at me through horn rimmed spectacles, looking like a pugnacious District Attorney, or possibly an extremely grim faced Phil Silvers. Also at this meeting was a middle aged chap introduced as Mr. Haughton, who was going to produce the covers for the new Disney paper. Without more ado, Haughton unfurled a roll of rather tatty cartridge paper and proudly showed me the cover of the first issue of Mickey Mouse Weekly,

minus the lettering, drawn entirely with coloured inks.'

'This display rather surprised me, as I thought that such an important colour job would have been executed on the best quality water colour board, but all of the subsequent covers were done in exactly the same way. At this point, a very nervous Basil Reynolds unfurled his humed offering. William B. Levy gazed at my piece in utter silence furiously rotating his jaw muscles while I squirmed in my seat. To my utter astonishment and delight however Haughton was enthusiastic "That's just the sort of thing we need, Bill" he said. Bill Levy nodded and said "Okay Reynolds, well take it - three pounds a page" and that was that!'

'I shall always be grateful to Wilfred Haughton. If he hadn't chanced to be in the office that day I very much doubt whether Bill Levy would have taken me on. Years later Levy did admit to me that he knew nothing of the art side and was basically a merchandising man'.



MY FAVORITE MICKEY MOUSE HOLIDAY SPECIAL COVER

MOVING UP

It is not known why the new venture in Britain was called Willbank Publications but it would seem to make sense that William Levy was somehow involved financially?

As the embryo number one Mickey Mouse Weekly was being put together Willbanks moved from Shaftsbury Avenue to much more imposing premises in Wardour Street, next door to the Walt Disney Mickey Mouse Ltd. London Headquarters where all of the film and merchandise business was being handled. At that time the Managing Director for the London office was Kay Kamen, an extremely tough American, physically and in a business sense, who later returned to the US to become Chairman of the Ingersoll Rand Company. Mr. Rosenberg apparently left the firm even prior to the move to Wardour Street.

Soon after Reynolds was appointed, Willbank hired Silvey A. Clarke as Assistant Editor (Bill Levy was nominally the Editor) who was effectively "poached" from Amalgamated Press (she later became Editor during the war). The remaining staff compliment was rounded off with the addition of artist Victor (Ibby) Ibbotson who made the short trip from next door where he had been working on Disney promotions (puzzles, games etc.), and another artist by the name of Miss Phyliss Thorpe, with sub editor George Rutherford and an extrovert young office boy called Alfred Hunt. Added to these full time staffers was freelance veteran comic artist Stanley White. When the 10"x15" comic was eventually launched priced at only 2d (two pennies) on 8 February 1936 the first edition of Mickey Mouse Weekly set many milestones. It was the first British coloured comic to be printed using the recently developed and very expensive colour photogravure process (photographic engraving) later used with such effect by the Eagle comic in the 1950s. It was also one of the earliest and most important jobs undertaken by Odhams Press at their new press works in Watford. Odhams themselves would later become a publisher of numerous British comics, eventually taking over the Eagle itself. The Mickey Mouse comic was a phenomenal success with circulation figures rumored to have reached 750,000+ copies per week in a very short period of time.

INSIDE THE MOUSE

The content of that first issue set the tone for all that followed with eight and three quarter pages out of a total of twelve produced by British creators.

It had a cover by Wilfred Haughton. A page of 'Skit and Skat', a half page fishing game and a 'Shuffled Symphonies' page (based on Disney's 'Silly Symphonies') all by Basil Reynolds. A page of 'Ian on Mu' >

A FINE SHOWING OF EARLY ANNUAL COVERS

and 'Ginger Nick' by Stanley White, and a half page British syndicated 'Bobby Bear' by Wilfred Haughton. A short one page story entitled 'Lord of the Hills', written and illustrated by veteran freelance artist Richard Ogle, and a three quarter page joke section. A small quarter page strip was provided by another veteran freelance artist called Reg Carter who contributed a strip called 'The Troubles of father'. The remainder of the comic was made up of syndicated King Features Disney material which ran as a coloured centre spread and back page. One curious exception to the American Disney strips was the inclusion of another US strip called 'Ted Towers, Animal Master', allegedly scripted by Frank Buck of 'Bring 'em Back Alive' fame. Another oddity of this comic was how the language changes on the Disney strip from American slang to its British equivalent. Consequently 'Omigosh!' became 'Goodness me!', 'Dogone it!' became 'Bother it!', and 'I dunno!' became the unwieldy 'I don't know!'.

All ran smoothly for the new publication for a couple of years, until it was decided that the stalwart veteran Wilfred Haughton could no longer keep up with the way that Mickey Mouse was evolving in America. He was replaced by Victor Ibbotson and occasionally Basil Reynolds who took over the front cover. Also in this interim period the great British comic artist Reg Perrott joined the staff providing ongoing serials such as 'The Road to Rome' with lavish illustrations, eventually graduating to a colour centre spread with 'White Cloud' and 'Song of the Sword'.

At the start of the Second World War the firm was evacuated to Limners, Stag Lane, Chorley Wood in Herts, and a number of staff members were called up for service including Basil Reynolds. During the war years the effects of paper shortage reduced the number of pages in the comic from 12 to 8 (5 July 1940). It was altered to a bi-weekly comic with a name change to just Mickey Mouse on 11 April 1942. It returned to a 12-page comic on 4 March 1950, and returned to being called Mickey Mouse Weekly on 21 October of the same year.

RUMOUR MILL

It is rumored that during this period Bill Levy sold his shares in Willbank Publishing to Odhams Press and returned to the US (reasonable assumption if that's where "Will' came from in Willbank). It was just prior to joining the service that basil Reynolds recalls entering Levy's office one day only to be introduced to Walt Disney's elder brother Roy, the business brain and financial head of the organisation. In Reynold's own words 'Roy was kind enough to say that they all thought that Mickey Mouse Weekly was doing a good job, and that they approved and were quite happy with the 'Shuffled Symphonies' idea and format.' Roy Disney outlived his more famous brother Walt by several years and was there to open the gigantic project Disney World in October 1971.

Later editorial changes saw H.T. Cauldwell and Reginald Taylor join the comic, again from Amalgamated Press. Other staff artist changes included the addition of Ernie Richardson, Ralph Draper, Willie Clarkson, Barry Appleby of The Gambols fame, and the prolific William A. Ward who drew 'Donald and Mac' for a number of years.

In October 1955 the comic was re-titled Walt Disney's Mickey's Weekly and at the end of 1957 there was an unfortunate court case involving the copyright of the Disney Characters. The end result was a split in the Odhams-Disney arrangement with Walt Disney promoting and publishing through Walt Disney Productions (Vernon Holdings) its own comic called Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse from January 1958 to January 1959 before finally being called Walt Disney's Weekly until the end of its run in April 1961.

In the end Mickey Mouse Weekly had a magnificent run of 920 issues, carrying on continually (though reduced in size) throughout the Second World War whilst so many other comics closed down through paper shortages, never to return.

JUST ONE OF A HOST OF MICKEY MOUSE PRODUCTS PRODUCED AND LICENSED THROUGH THE UK.

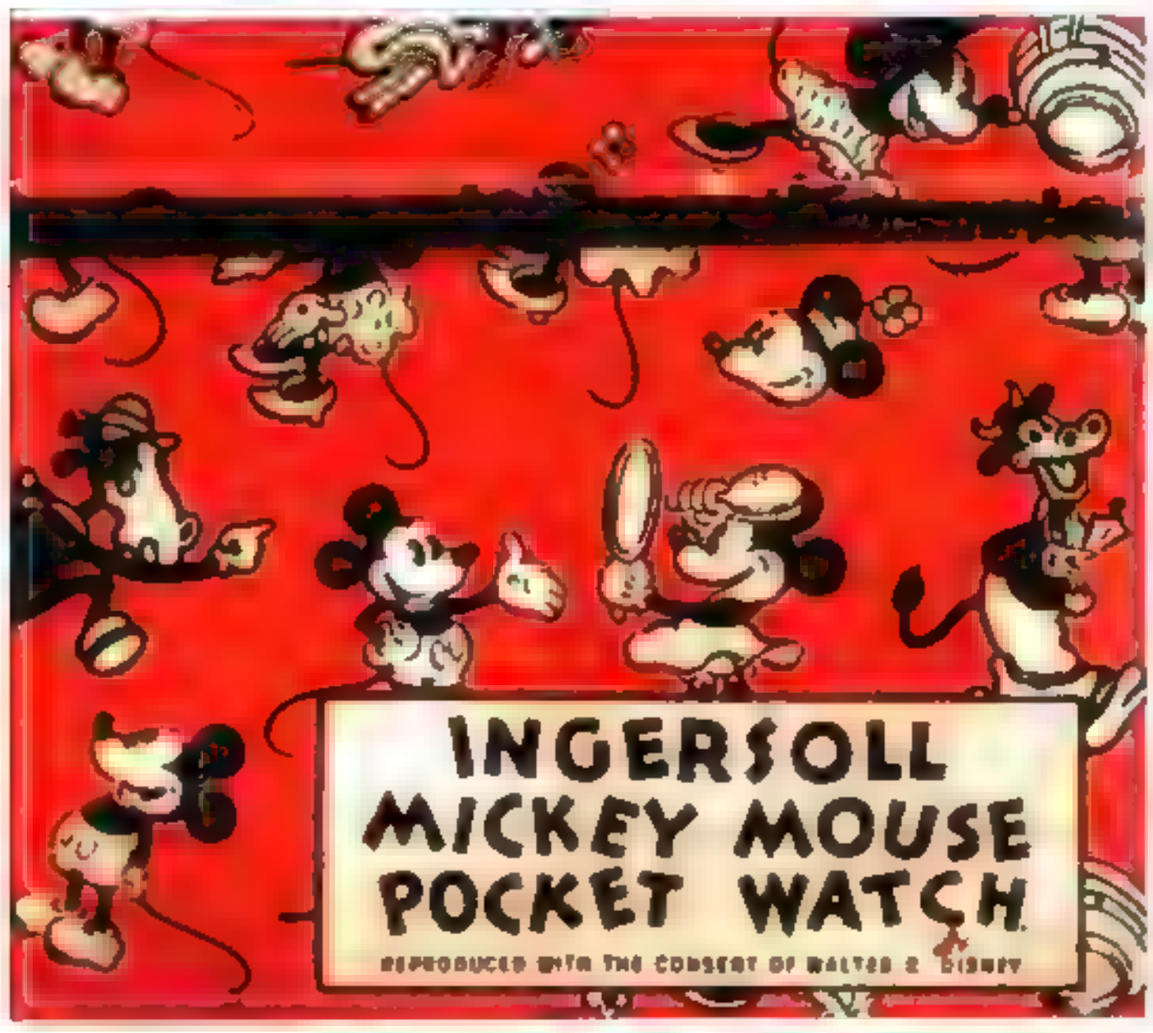
CLASSIC MOUSE

On its way to achieving this impressive run a vast panoply of comic luminaries graced the pages of this comic including Basil

MICKEY MOUSE
TOY LANTERN OUTFIT
produced with permission of
WALTER E. DISNEY
by ENSIGN LIMITED London.WC1
Complete with MICKEY MOUSE SLIDES
MICKEY MOUSE LANTERN AND COLOURED GLASS SLIDES FOR WARTIME ENTERTAINMENT (I WATCHED 'EM LAST NIGHT!)

(ABOVE) A GOOFY TOY CAR MADE IN THE "EMPIRE" FOR SALE IN THE UK CIRCA 1930'S/40'S

(BELOW) A 1932 MICKY MOUSE WATCH



Reynolds, the short lived but incredibly talented Reg Perrot (who died of throat cancer in 1947, whilst still in his thirties), Reg Carter who also graced he pages of the first issue of the Beano, Alan Philpott who drew the curiously named 'The return of Captain Scarlet' in the 1950s (where have I heard that name before?), James Holdaway, Ron Embleton, Bill Lacey, Tony Weare, and Bob MacGilliveray to mention a few.

Also of particular note are the three 64 page Mickey Mouse Holiday Specials produced annually by Willbanks in 1936, 37, and 38. The fourth of this series was entitled Mickey Mouse Xmas Special and was published in 1940. With photogravure cover and sixty eight pages in total, 12 in red and black, and

(BELOW) MICKY MOUSE CLUB BADGES

the remainder in black and white, these were the very first British holiday "Specials" of their kind. They contained original British material, King features and Mickey Mouse Magazine material.

Why this comic is not more collectible and held in higher regard has become a mystery to me, but hopefully after reading this article some of you will give it a chance and take a look at a hidden gem in the history of British comics. ●

© Peter Hansen, October 2008

EXCLUSIVE!

SE ON CAPRI
LOSE
OOK.
INA
YES, MY KNIGHT'S MOVE WAS A MISTAKE ... I RESIGN
TO MAKE SUBCONSCIOUSLY YOU WISH HIM TO CONQUER YOU
HANS... YOU WILL PLEASE MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS
DO YOU THINK SHE WILL STOP?
OF COURSE, IDIOT... THE ENGLISH ARE DERANGED CONCERNING ANIMALS
ACCIDENT THEY'VE H.T A DONKEY
SIMPLY ARRANGED TO MAKE YOU STOP
HOME
WHAT THE HELL!
ALRIGHT— R CAR M?
2631

NEXT ISSUE:

Modesty BLAISE

ARTIST ROMERO

IS FEATURED IN THE

Crikey! CHAT!

DON'T MISS IT!

MY COMICY SATURDAY

REMEMBERED BY - mike hiss

WE'LL HAVE TO TRAVEL BACK TO THE EARLY 50's FOR THIS, SO HERE'S MY TIME MACHINE. IT'S A TARDIS OBVIOUSLY, BUT UNFORTUNATELY I COULDN'T GET ONE THAT LOOKED LIKE A POLICE BOX...

SUBURBS OF BIRMINGHAM IN THE VERY EARLY FIFTIES...

COMICY SATURDAY, EH? EVERY DAY WAS A COMICY DAY FOR ME.

...AND TARDIS STANDS FOR TIME ALLOTTED REMEMBERING DISTANT INTERESTING SATURDAYS IN CASE YOU WONDERED.

MY MOM BOUGHT ME ALL MY COMICS IN MY EARLY READING DAYS...THEY WERE WHERE I FIRST CAME ACROSS CHARACTERS LIKE...

TIGER TIM
SAMMY SPROCKETT
STONEHENGE KIT
OUR ERNIE
HOMELESS HECTOR
SHEIKH HAMID
JACK FLASH
FREDDY, THE FEARLESS FLY
HARRIS TWEED
DAN DARE
KEYHOLE KATE
COMIC
...AND LEGIONS OF OTHER GREAT COMIC HEROES!

WHEN IT WAS TOO RAINY TO PLAY OUTSIDE, WE WERE ALLOWED TO READ COMICS AT SCHOOL...

WHICH LEFT ME DAY-DREAMING WITH A HEAD FULL OF COMIC BOOK IMAGES...

COMICS
CAPTAIN CRASH

STOP DAYDREAMING BOY!

WAP!

OW

-TEACHERS WEREN'T POLITICALLY CORRECT IN THOSE DAYS!

OUTDOORS, KIDS WOULD TRADE COMICS WITH EACH OTHER...

MY TOM MIX AND A BEANO FOR YOUR MARVEL FAMILY!

THROW IN A PACKET OF SPANGLES AND IT'S A DEAL!

SOME OF THE KID'S DADS BOUGHT COMICS FROM SALESMEN WHO USED TO GO AROUND THE PUBS...

FOR THE KIDS! 3 FOR A BOB*!

COMIC MAN

*TRANSLATION:- A BOB = ONE SHILLING.

WHEN I SPOTTED A "MUST HAVE" TITLE IN A NEWSAGENT'S WINDOW...

COR!

...I'D RUSH HOME TO TRY AND CADGE SOME MONEY...

MOM! MOM! I NEED A TANNER!*

?

*TANNER = OLD SIXPENNY COIN

...THEN MAKE AN EVEN MORE MANIC DASH BACK TO THE SHOP BEFORE THEY SOLD IT!

FRIENDLY BRUMMIE ADMONISHMENT

YA BARMY LITTLE B*@*!?#!

OOPS!

SCREECH!

MY DANGEROUS LIFESTYLE CONTINUED AS I WALKED HOME WITH MY NOSE BURIED IN THE BOOK!

I QUIT!

GUARDIAN ANGEL

HOTSPUR

FINALLY, THE ACTUAL SATURDAY DAWNED...

SATURDAY NORMALLY STARTED WITH A VISIT TO THE CHILDREN'S MORNING MATINEE AT THE LOCAL CINEMA...

...WHICH OFFERED A COUPLE OF HOURS OF CHEERING BRAVE HEROES AND BOOING VILE VILLAINS.

ON THE WAY HOME, GAMES WERE PLAYED USING THE IMAGINATION.

EXIT

...OR A POINTED FINGER BECAME A DEADLY SIX-SHOOTER!

POW! POW! POW! POW!

A COAT TIED AROUND THE NECK BECAME A SUPERHERO'S CAPE...

AFTER LUNCH, THE SERIOUS COMIC HUNTING BEGAN...

FEELS LIKE A GOOD COMIC DAY TODAY!

...FOR ME, THAT SOMETIMES MEANT A TRIP ON THE No. 8 BUS...

8

INNER CIRCLE

BUS STOP INNER CIRCLE 8

PENNY CHILD'S PLEASE!

..TO THE MARKET AND THE STALL THAT SOLD OLD BOOKS AND COMICS...

COMIC HUNTING SKILL No 1: WHEN APPROACHING A STALL BLOCKED BY BIG FAT ADULTS...

?

...LEARN THE ART of SQUEEZING THROUGH REALLY NARROW GAPS!

THEN I'D WANDER DOWN THE SORT OF WEIRD BACK STREETS THAT WOULD HAVE GIVEN MY MOTHER A FIT IF SHE HAD SEEN ME THERE ...

ODDS

AHA! A LIKELY LOOKING SHOP!

I'D STEP INTO THE DINGY INTERIOR WHICH ALWAYS SEEMED TO SMELL OF CABBAGE WATER, OLD CLOTHES AND CAT PEE...

COMIC HUNTING SKILL No.2 LEARN TO SNIFF OUT THE GOODS IN THE MOST UNLIKELY LOOKING PLACES...

YERS?

'ANG ON A MO'!

THUD!

THERE Y'ARE!

ER... HAVE YOU GOT ANY COMICS PLEASE?

I EXPERIENCED FANTASTIC ANTICIPATION AS I WADED THROUGH THE PILE OF COMICS...

PHANTOM

..FOLLOWED BY AN ATOMIC BURST OF ADRENALINE WHEN I FOUND A TITLE I REALLY WANTED!

OFF I'D GO WITH A FAT WAD OF COMICS UNDER MY ARM...

COMICS

MORE COMICS

I'D READ THE HORROR TITLES ON THE BUS WHILE TRAVELLING HOME...

SUSPENSE

...AND QUICKLY HIDE THEM WHEN I GOT IN BECAUSE MY MOM DIDN'T APPROVE OF ME READING THEM...

...THEN I PAID FOR MY UNDER-HANDED BEHAVIOUR AT NIGHT BY SWEATING THROUGH SOME GRADE "A" NIGHTMARES!

NOT ALL COMICS GAVE ME BAD DREAMS AND I LOVED THEM SO MUCH THAT I WANTED TO DRAW THEM MYSELF...

..AND ONE DAY I DID!

HERE'S ONE MORE MEMORY OF A COMICY SATURDAY...

...MY DAD OCCASIONALLY TOOK ME WITH HIM FOR A LUNCHTIME PINT IN A PUB THAT ALLOWED KIDS TO SIT IN THEIR BACK YARD...

BACK FROM THE DEAD!

PERFECT! A COMIC BOOK TO READ. A ROAST BEEF SANDWICH AND A GLASS OF VIMTO! WHAT ELSE COULD YOU WANT?

MY YOUNGER SELF LOOKS QUITE HAPPY, DOESN'T HE?

-SO I THINK THAT'S AS GOOD A TIME AS ANY TO LEAVE HIM IN THAT WORLD OF THE PAST...

...AMONGST ALL THOSE HAPPY MEMORIES!

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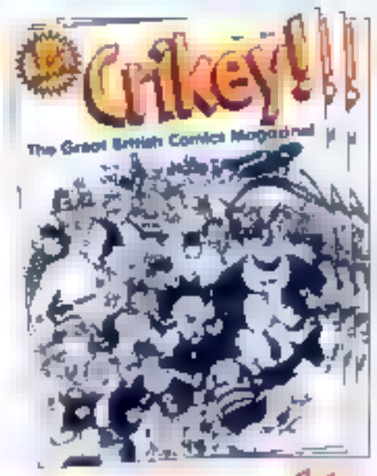

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Terrible Toys of Dr Droll
Frank Bellamy
Overview of Misty comic
Wham!
Devil in the Shop

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Victor

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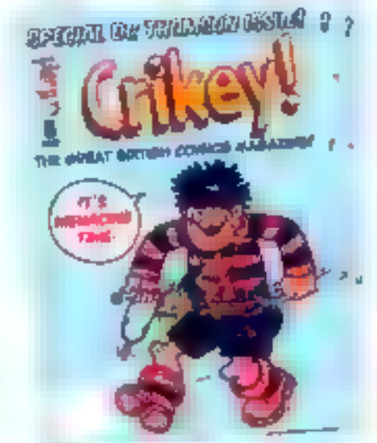

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Sparky

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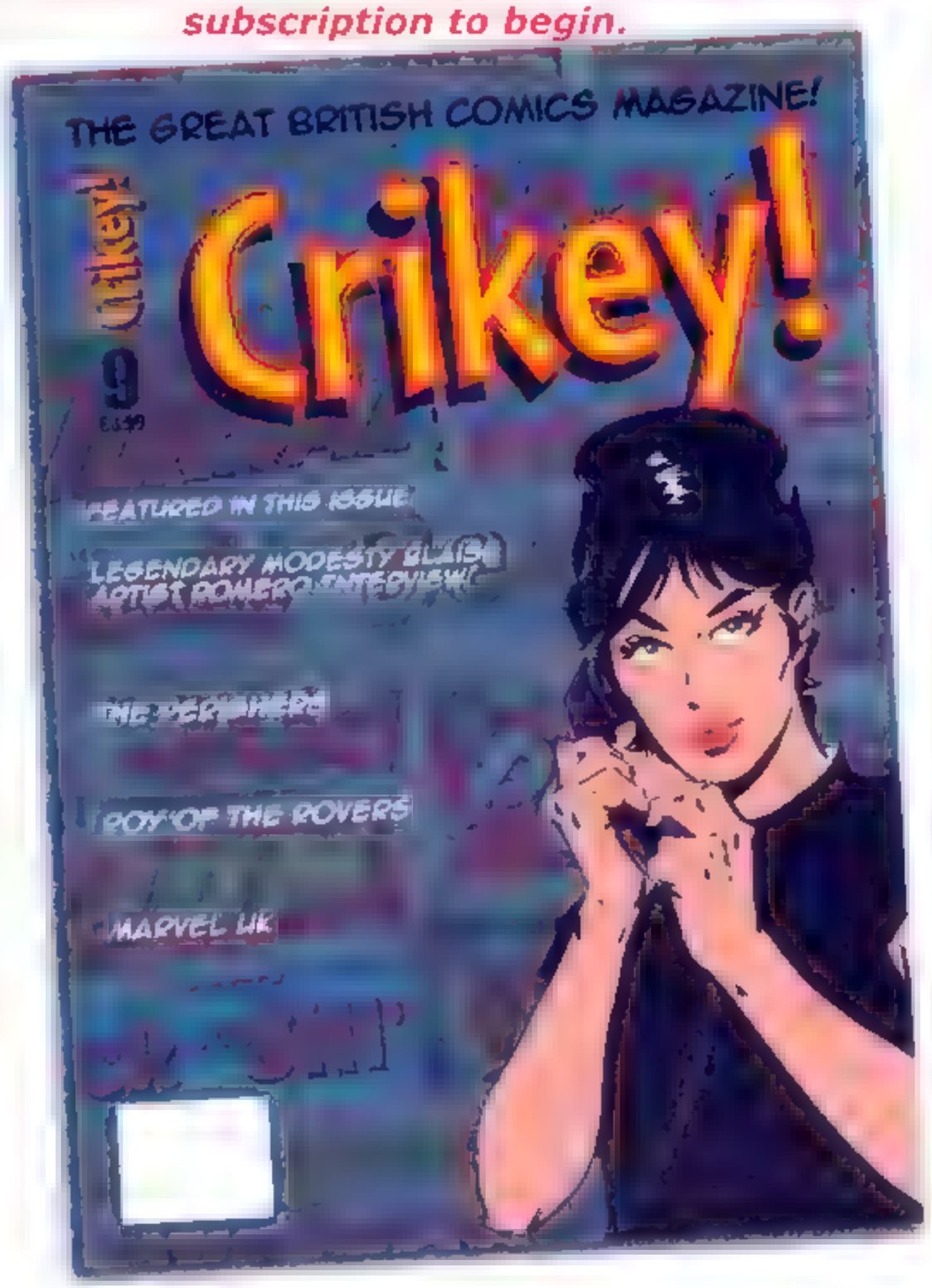


THE BEST OF BRITISH

A CONSIDERATION OF THE DC THOMSON ARTISTS

BY PETER HANSEN

For over a hundred years kids in every part of Britain have had their daily fix of comics. Absolutely nothing in the history of popular culture can come close to the impact that comics have had on British children. You simply cannot name a 20th century British phenomenon that can match the longevity or influence of comics. Not pop records, Dr. Who, The Wombles, Hoola Hoops, The Beatles or anything else you can think of.A pop album goes Platinum after a million sales.At its peak the *Beano* itself sold more than two million copies per week!

If you disregard the smaller publishing companies such as G.G.Swan (*Cute Fun*, *Slick Fun*) and Target Publications (*Rattler*, *Sparkler*) and even considerably larger concerns such as Hulton Press (*Eagle*, *Girl*, *Swift*) and Odhams (*Wham!*, *Smash*) there have been only two comic publishing giants in Britain. The mighty DC Thomson, and their major comics publishing competitor the *Amalgamated Press*. The latter of course morphed into *Fleetway*, then *IPC Media* absorbing *Odham's Press* en route, who in turn had absorbed *Longacre Press* and *Hulton Press* along the way. (See *Crikey! 2* for detailed history of the fleeting way these companies changed - Ever-commercial Ed.)

Today the two major publishers are all that really remain and both are only a shadow of their former self in terms of comics output. None-the-less the memory of their golden days lives on in the minds of many of you reading this article. Names like Denis the Menace, Desperate Dan, Korky the Cat, Judge Dredd, Captain Hurricane, Steel Claw, Karl the Viking, Buster, Billy Bunter and a host of others conjure up childhood images. Images of being curled up in bed on Christmas morning reading the annuals that had been stuffed into your stocking the night before. Steadfastly refusing to go outside to play with your new toys because you just had to finish reading your new annuals first.

As I read the marvelous exploits of those characters I always wondered who had created and drawn them. Now some 35 years on it is only with a concerted effort that I have learned the names of some of the men who created my boyhood favourites.

Many reasons have been offered up over the years as to why British comic artists remained anonymous for so

SPECIAL THANKS TO FACT CHECKER RAY MOORE FOR HIS VALUABLE COMMENTS!

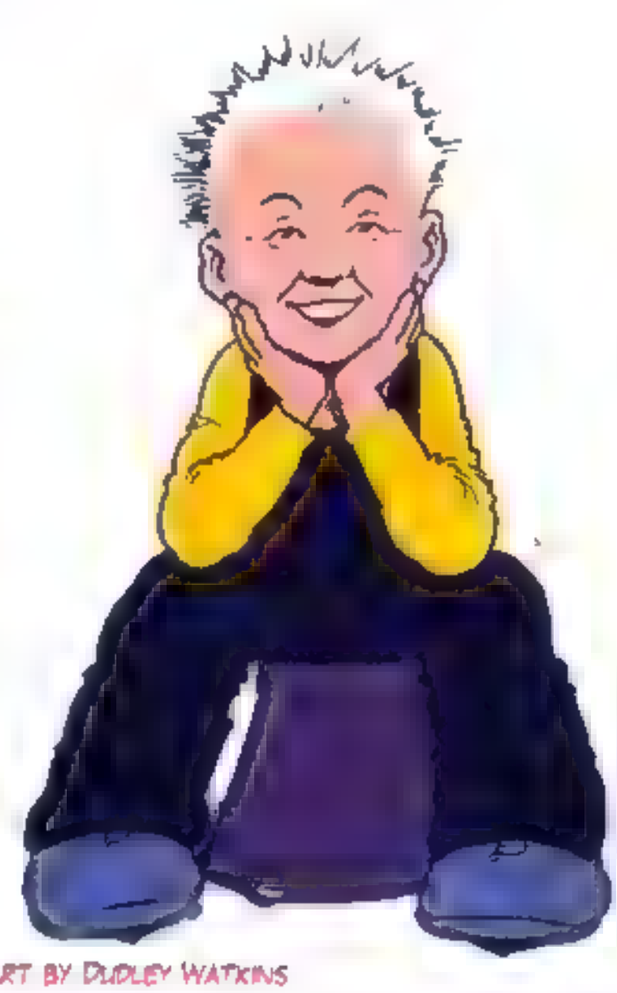
long. Everything from publishers wanting to stop the competition from poaching them, to publishers having paid for the artwork and therefore owning it outright, to not wanting to single out any particular sector within the company and thus create elitism or friction.

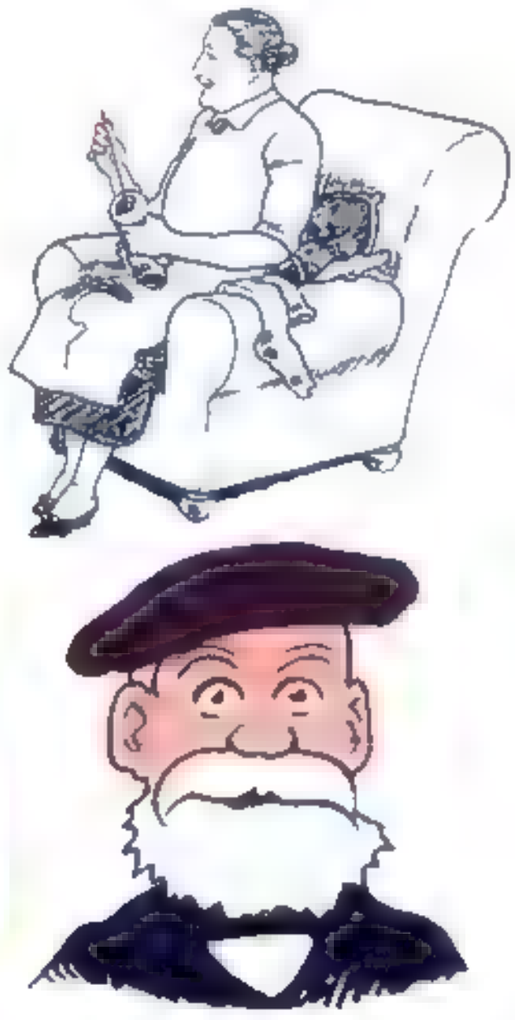
Whatever the reason, I knew nothing about my boyhood favourites until late on in my comic collecting career. Now I can share with you some brief information on the careers of those artists whose work many of us are so familiar with but never knew their names. To begin with I will focus on the artists of DC Thomson, and would welcome any questions you may have about your own personal favourite strips or artist.

DUDLEY D WATKINS

A truly masterful comic book artist, equally at home with comics as with adventure strips - and fast with it.

Born in Manchester and raised in Nottingham he became one of only two DC Thomson artists allowed to regularly sign their work. Watkins' work appeared in a comprehensive array of DC Thomson publications from 1925 until his death in 1969. This work included the 'Big Five' boys' story papers *Adventure*, *Rover*, *Wizard*, *Skipper* and *Hotspur*, the classic titles *Dandy*, *Beano*, *Magic*, *Topper* and *Beezer*, the nursery title *Bimbo*, the newspaper *The Sunday Post* and the magazines *Topical Times* and *The Peoples Journal*. (See also Peter's article on a little-known aspect of Watkins' work in *Crikey! 6* - Historica Ed.) >





His creations are legend. 'Desperate Dan' (*Dandy*), 'Lord Snooty and his Pals', 'Biffo The Bear', 'Jimmy and his Magic Patch', 'The Shipwrecked Circus' (*Beano*), 'Peter Piper' (*Magic*), 'Oor Wullie', 'The Broons' (*Sunday Post*), 'Wild Young Dirky' (*People's Journal*, *Topper*), 'Mickey The Monkey' (*Topper*), 'Ginger' (*Beezer*), and many more. One of my own personal favourites was his adaptation of H. Rider Haggard's King Solomon's Mines (*Topper*).

Without doubt a cast of characters to match any comic artist in the World.

Allan Morley

Until recently, the only other DC Thomson artist allowed to sign his art work - and what work it was.

Strictly a comic artist, he produced such famous strips as 'Nosey Parker', 'Keyhole Kate', 'Hungry Horace', 'Nero and Zero', 'Julius Sneezer' and 'Freddy the Fearless Fly'.

Morley, originally from Scarborough, was nicknamed 'The Morley Machine' at DC Thomson because he could just 'churn' it out. Like Watkins, Morley provided strips for the DC Thomson newspapers, and he also started his rise to prominence with the first issue of the *Dandy* in 1937.

Leo Baxendale

Like Watkins and Morley, Baxendale was a comic genius but one of the 'new breed' of artists that arrived at DC Thomson in the early 1950s.

After his arrival on the scene as a freelance artist from Lancashire he made an immediate impact and after a short apprenticeship drew his first original character, 'Little Plum', in 1953. In short order Plum was followed by 'Minnie the Minx', and 'When the Bell Rings', the original title of 'The Bash Street Kids'. He followed these classics up with 'The Banana Bunch', and 'The Three Bears'. (See *Crikey! 1* for more on Leo's influential career - Suggestive Ed.)

Ken Reid

Another one of the early 1950s intake was the undisputed king of madcap comics.

Manchester born, who Like Baxendale also worked freelance, Reid began his DC Thomson created the work-shy lord of the lazy lads 'Roger the Dodger' before moving on to 'Angel Face', 'Bing Bang Benny', 'Grandpa', 'Ali Ha-Ha' and the landmark 'Jonah', recognised today as a comic classic.

The amount of detail that Reid would pack into his strips was legend and he was renowned for trying to slip a little 'naughty bit' into a panel which he tried to slip past the editors. It became an ongoing little game between Reid and the DC Thomson editors which sometimes Reid would win. (See *Crikey! 1* for more on Ken - ITMA Ed.)

David Law

Born in Edinburgh in July 1908, Law is the first Scotsman to make this illustrious shortlist.

A comic artist who deserves a spot in comic history for his introduction of 'Denis the Menace' in 1951. A strip he

drew until shortly before his death in 1971.

Law also introduced other classic Thomson characters such as 'Beryl the Peril', 'Captain Hand' and the loveable 'Corporal Clott'.

Law's artwork bubbles with enthusiasm and energy and was just perfect for the bad boy and girl of comics and the bungling army nitwit. (*Gasp!* There's no previous *Crikey!* To look up - Shocked Ed.)

Bill Ritchie

Ritchie's comic art is instantly recogniseable and full of humour.

A lifelong homegrown DC Thomson staff artist, Ritchie was yet another of the class of the 1950s whose career spanned a lifetime. From 'Baby Crockett' (*Beezer*) in the mid-fifties' vacated by the death of Dudley Watkins in 1969.

From the very beginning, John Geering produced quality work with his 'Puss and Boots' strip for *Sparky*. Later working on such quality strips as 'Bananaman', 'Smudge', 'Number 13' and 'The Nutters" (*Cracker*).

He suffered an untimely death in 1999 at the age of 58.

Malcolm Judge

A Glaswegian, Judge worked mostly on single cartoon jokes for the DC Thomson periodicals before making his major breakthrough into the juvenile comics with "The Badd Lads" in *The Beezer*. He followed this up with 'Colonel Crackpot's Circus' in the *Beano* before drawing the classic 'Numskulls', again in *The Beezer*.

Ritchie went on to draw 'Smiffy' (also *Beezer*) 'Clumsy Claude' and 'Sweet Sue' (*Beano*), 'Toots' (*Bunty*), 'Pip the Penguin' (*Bimbo*), 'The Moonsters', Barney Bul dog' (*Sparky*), 'The Twitz of The Ritz' (*Buzz*) and 'Simple Spyman' (*Cracker*).

Throughout his career he has displayed a penchant for animal cartoons and his dry humour shines through in these strips. Now retired, Ritchie is the keeper of the light that was DC Thomson, trying in his own way to preserve a little piece of Brit sh comic history.

John Geering

John Geering was considered by many at DC Thomson to be the 'heir apparent' to the mantle of 'King'

His distinctive style can be followed through the Thomson comics and his later work included 'Billy Whizz' (*Beano*), 'Ali and his Baba' (*Sparky*), 'Hop Skip and Jock' (*Buzz*), 'Ba.l Boy (*Beano*) and "Square Eyes" (*Topper*).

Hugh Morren

Another of the 1950s intake, Morren could turn his hand to just about anything though comics were his undoubted forte.

Starting with 'Calamity Jane' (*Beezer*, Jan 1956), and quickly followed by 'Just Jimmy' in the *Dandy* in June 1956 Morren continued his long career with 'Wee Peem' in 1957 (*Beano*), 'The Smasher' (*Dandy*), 'Little Al' (*New Hotspur*), 'The Mob Next Door' (*Beezer*), 'Harry Presto' (*Sparky*), >

'Helpful Henry' (*Sparky*) and 'Country Cuzzins'.

Paddy Brennan

He started his long association with the DC Thomson juvenile publications just slightly earlier than most of the 1950s gang drawing 'Sir Solomon Snoozer' in the Dandy in 1949.

Brennan went on to produce a plethora of quality work including 'Young Drake' and 'Crackaway Jack' for the *Dandy*, 'Long egs the Desert Wild Boy', 'Red Rory' 'Shipwrecked Circus' and 'General Jumbo', all for the *Beano*. He also did 'Captain Blood', 'Wulf of the Arrows', 'The Jolly Rogers', and 'Flip McCoy' for the *Topper*.

He drew an adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' in the first twenty issues of *Bunty* which began an association with the Thomson girl's papers that would last until the end of his career in the 1990s. He was particularly prolific for Judy comic fro which he created, amongst other things, the long-running 'Sandra' ballet series.

Tom Bannister

Yet another Lancastrian who joined DCT. Tom won a place through a submission for a competition he entered (he finished second)

Years later he was contacted and asked to contribute to a new title called *The Beezer*. His first contribution was a superb one, and resulted in 'Pop, Dick, and Harry' appearing in colour and eventually ascending to the front page where it was the intermittent cover star for many years - issues 34 to 321(1956 - 1962), 336 to 456 (1962-4) and 457 to 1314 (1964-1981).

From this initial strip Banister moved on to create 'Colonel Blink' (*Beezer* 1958), and for *The Topper* he created Figaro (1960), Desert Island Dick (1964), and 'Tiny the World's Biggest Dog' ending his career drawing 'Al Change - the boy who's his own Granny'.

Jimmy Hughes

Most of Jimmy Hughes comic work appeared in the *Dandy* with his best known strips being 'Bully Beef and Chips' (one of my favourites) and of course 'The Jocks and the Geordies'.

Ken Hunter

Yet another DC Thomson staff artist who joined the team in the early 1950s. His work included 'Big Fat Boko' 'Sir Laughalot', 'Danny's Tranny', and 'The Mini Martins' all from the Topper, 'Wee Davie and the Great Big Giant' (*Beano*), 'My Pal Baggypants' and 'Barney's Barmy Army' (*Beezer*) and a host of great serial stories for *Beezer* and *Topper* such as 'The Iron Eaters'.

George Martin

Yet another of the 1950s addition to

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the DCT pedigree stable. George did his first strip in the *Dandy* in 1953 ('Wiley Smiley - The Jungle Joker') and progressed from there for another 30 years including five wonderful covers for the *Topper Book* (1959, 63, 66, 68, 70).

Amongst his more recognisable strips are 'Calamity Kate' (*Buzz*), 'Young Sid' (*Beezer*), 'Jammy Mr. Sammy', 'Izzy Skint', and 'Jolly Roger' (*Dandy*), as well as 'Captain Bungle', 'King Gussie', 'Julius Cheeser', 'Ali Babble', 'Super Specs' and 'Whistling Billy' (*Topper*). George also worked on excellent 'The Hills and the Billys' (*Beezer*) and the Topper's 'Send For Kelly' which he drew and mostly wrote for 30 years.

Bill Hill

Bill Hill had a productive career with DC Thomson that spanned over 25 years.

He worked on the police farce strip 'L-Cars' and the revised 'Nosey Parker' (*Sparky*) and 'Spike' followed up by 'Black Bun' (*Beezer*).

Bill took over 'The Banana Bunch' (*Beezer*) from Leo Baxendale in 1964 and drew the strip for the next 23 years. *Beezer* remained a major title for Bill where he also drew 'The Mob Next Door', 'Tommy Taylor's Toybox', 'Wrinkle and Twinkle', 'Roly Poly', and 'Pedro the Pesky Parrot'.

He disappeared from the comics scene after these two successful and popular series ended.

Les Barton

Created the highly successful 'I-Spy' series for the *Sparky* followed by 'Autoteach' in the *Topper*. Other strips to get the Barton magic were 'Tom Kat', 'Ma Kelly's Telly' (*Sparky*) and 'Phone the Crows' (*Topper*). Les was always known mostly for his cartoon work for newspapers and magazines, a career's he been following since his first cartoon appeared in *Reveille* in 1949 and latterly including cartoon for the likes of *Private Eye* and *The Oldie*. Sadly, Les died recently, aged 85.

Jim Petrie

Perhaps the best know of the 'ghost' artists who took over from Leo Baxendale on 'Minnie the Minx' from 1962 and drew her exploits for the rest of his career (40 years).

His only known strip outside of Minnie was 'The Sparky People' which he drew in the *Sparky* from 1969 and into its amalgamation with *The Topper* in 1977. It finally came to an end ten years after 652 installments in 1979.

It's almost impossible to stop once you begin a list of DC Thomson artists. Certainly it is difficult to know who to include and who to leave out. Depending on the response to this list perhaps I shall include other DCT artists in a future issue. If you have any requests, just let the Editor know and he will pass them on.

I have to say that for me personally it has always been the artwork itself that attracts me to a comic in the first place. And while it is nice to have a comic that brings back memories of your childhood, it is a completely different experience to own a piece of artwork of a favourite character.

It is unique, a one off, that no-one else has. You can see when looking at an expanded art page the effort and creativity that the artist has poured into the page to bring it to life.

In the case of DC Thomson artwork this is doubly so, since with a few exceptions little comic artwork has escaped from the highly secure highland vaults in Dundee. Yes indeed, for although numerous pieces of IPC artwork have come to light, DC Thomson maintain a tight grip on their artwork. ●

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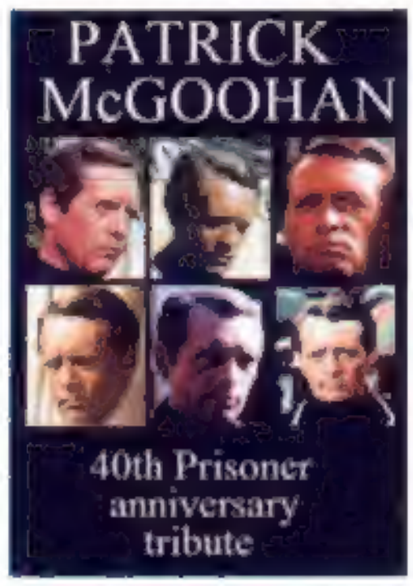

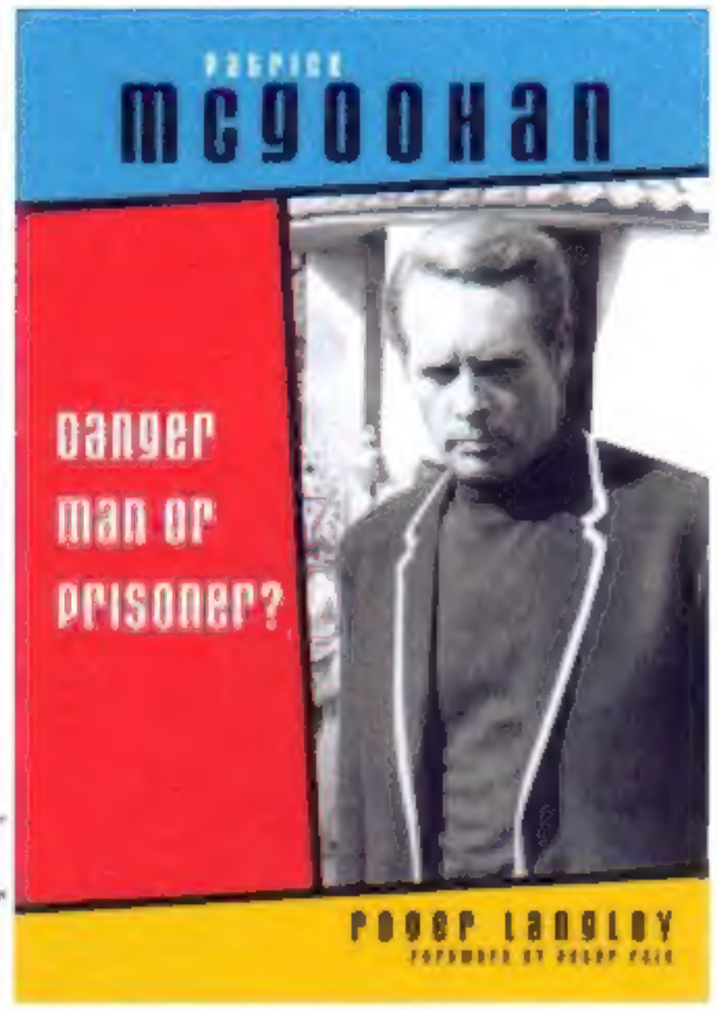

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ALL ORIGINAL COMIC ARTWORK, BRITISH OR AMERICAN. I HAVE SPENT WELL OVER A MILLION POUNDS IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS BUYING ALL TYPES OF COLLECTIBLE ITEMS. I AM BOTH A DEALER AND COLLECTOR WITH A PASSION FOR ORIGINAL COMIC ART AND PAY RECORD PRICES ON A REGULAR BASIS FOR ITEMS I AM LOOKING FOR. I WILL CONSIDER ANYTHING COLLECTIBLE FROM ONE PAGE TO A LARGE COLLECTION BUT AT PRESENT I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN 1960'S AND 1970'S AMERICAN COMIC ART, HIGH END – HIGH VALUE COMIC ART PAGES, 2000AD COVERS, EAGLE COVERS, TV CENTURY 21 COVERS AND INTERIOR PAGES, LOOK IN, LION, VALIANT, IN FACT ALL 1960'S AND 1970'S COMIC ART, ALL DC THOMSON, SMASH, WHAM, TIGER, DANDY AND BEANO COVERS AND INTERIORS.

WANTED! A FEW GOOD MEN!

BOO COOK, BRETT EWINS, BRIAN BOLLAND, BRYAN TALBOT, CAM KENNEDY, CARL CRITCHLOW, CARLOS EZQUERRA, CLIFF ROBINSON, CLINT LANGLEY, COLIN MACNEIL, COLIN WILSON, DAVE GIBBONS, DEAN ORMSTON, ERIC BRADBURY, GLENN FABRY, GREG STAPLES, HENRY FLINT, IAN GIBSON, IAN KENNEDY, JAMIE HEWLETT, JASON BRASHILL, JOCK, KEVIN O'NEILL, KEVIN WALKER, MASSIMO BELARDINELLI, MIKE COLLINS, MIKE MCMAHON, PETER DOHERTY, ROBIN SMITH, RON SMITH, SEAN PHILLIPS, SIMON BISLEY, SIMON DAVIS, STEVE DILLON, TREVOR HAIRSINE. JUST TO NAME A SMALL FEW!

I'M NOW LOOKING TO EXPAND OUT OUR COMIC ART SELECTION, I'M LOOKING TO PURCHASE ORIGINAL COMIC ART FOR BOTH SILVER ACRE STOCK AND MY OWN PERSONAL COLLECTION. IF YOU ARE A COLLECTOR OR ARTIST AND WOULD CONSIDER SELLING YOUR COMIC ART TO ME PLEASE LET US KNOW. WILL CONSIDER ANYTHING FROM ONE PAGE TO A LARGE COLLECTION OR AN ARTISTS PORTFOLIO AND AS ALWAYS WE ARE PREPARED TO PAY A HIGH PRICE TO GET ITEMS WE REQUIRE. THIS REQUEST IS PARTICULARLY BEING SENT TO CUSTOMERS WHO PURCHASED ODD 2000AD AND RELATED BRITISH ART IN THE PAST. YOU MAY HAVE ONE PAGE OR A FEW PAGES THAT YOU PICKED UP AT UKCAC OVER THE YEARS OR OTHER SIGNINGS ETC. I'M EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN THESE!
IF YOU'VE GOT A PAGE LET US KNOW THE TITLE OF THE COMIC IT CAME FROM, ISSUE AND PAGE NUMBER AND I WILL MAKE YOU AN OFFER WITH NO COMMITMENT OR PRESSURE TO SELL. ALSO! IF YOU KNOW OF ANY ART DEALS, BIG OR SMALL, EITHER SINGLE PAGES THAT MAY BE FOR SALE,

STOP PRESS! WHO HAS THE MISSING 2000AD COVERS?

THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF UNACCOUNTED FOR PRE-ISSUE #600 COVERS AND QUALITY INTERIOR PAGES THAT SIMPLY ARE UNACCOUNTED FOR. THESE ARE ITEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO ME PERSONALLY AND I WILL PAY A HIGH PRICE TO OBTAIN ANY 2000AD COVERS OR INTERIOR PAGES AND IF YOU HAVE ANY BRIAN BOLLAND ORIGINAL ART, EVEN LESSER PAGES, IT'S A SERIOUSLY GOOD TIME TO SELL AS PRICES ARE VERY HIGH AT THIS PRESENT MOMENT! CASH WAITING! 01244 680048 OFFICE HOURS OR SIMPLY EMAIL DETAILS.

SILVERACRE COMICS
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PLEASE NOTE:
OVERSEAS CUSTOMERS SHOULD PAY BY STERLING MONEY ORDER OR PAYPAL ONLY FOR EITHER ITEM.

A2 PHANTOM POSTER

WE HAVE FOUND 22 UNUSED POSTERS ORIGINALLY PRODUCED FOR THE "70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHANTOM" EXHIBITIONS HELD AT VARIOUS VENUES IN 2006.

THESE COLLECTORS ITEMS WILL NOW BE MADE AVAILABLE TO TRUE PHANTOM PHANATICS FOR ONLY £30 EACH. POST FREE IN THE UK. £5 WORLDWIDE. SIGNED & NUMBERED BY THE ARTIST. STRICTLY FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!

WATCH OUT FOR UGLY DUCKLING PRESS

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